WORLD / A29

Japan ruling party picks Fukuda as prime minister

ENTERTAINMENT / F1

Rustom Padilla to make comedy film with brothers

NEWS / A2

Mother brings case of Jonas Burgos to UN office in Geneva

240,000 have already won!
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, September 24, 2007 ★★ 11 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 288 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

THE DIOSDADO Macapagal International Airport inside the Clark free port in Pampanga is poised to become the country's premier airport when the Ninoy Aquino International Airport reaches its saturation point. Chinese investors are raring to develop the Clark free port under the Arroyo administration.
TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

Estrada to accept absolute pardon

By Jocelyn R. Uy
and Christine O. Avendaño

SAYING HIS MAIN CONCERN WAS HIS AILing mother, deposed President Joseph Estrada yesterday strongly indicated he would accept an unconditional pardon that

ESTRADA/A12

China eyes Clark dev't

RP, Sino officials sign MOU for $1.6-B port investment

By Arlyn dela Cruz *Contributor*
and Tonette Orejas *Inquirer Central Luzon*

DESPITE THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal between the Philippine government and a Chinese firm, one of China's biggest state-owned banks has expressed an interest in investing $1.6 billion in the Clark Economic Zone in Pampanga, formerly home to a US military air base.

An official of China Development Bank (CDB) said it could finance the development of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) into a premier gateway and logistics hub in the Asia-Pacific region.

"We are a bank that honors our word," Zhao Jianping, CDB assistant governor for international cooperation, told a Philippine delegation at the bank's headquarters in Beijing on Sept. 14.

The Philippine delegation was headed by Nestor S. Mangio, chair of Clark International Airport Corp. (CIAC), and included Al Santos, chair of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), and Victor Jose I. Luciano, president and chief executive officer of CIAC.

A policy bank that operates as a commercial bank, CDB handles overseas investments "on a per-project basis," Zhao told the Philippine delegation.

Ms Arroyo was aware of the mission to Beijing, according to Mangio. "Make sure that it will

CHINA/A6

ESPINO: Gawad Lingkod awardee. JESS YUSON

Daring PAF rainmaker wins award

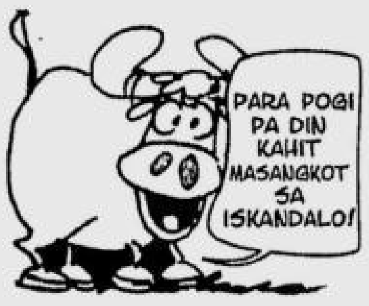
By Tj Burgonio

FLYING IS RISKY, BUT IT is riskier to pilot a light, poorly equipped plane through dark, turbulent clouds to disperse rain-inducing salt crystals.

For the past four years, Capt. Giemel Espino has been ignoring dire warnings on flying a single-engine Cessna on cloud-seeding operations to bring rain to parched farmlands.

"I know it's dangerous, but somebody has to do it," the Philippine Air Force (PAF) rainmaking pilot said in a phone interview

DARING/A17



PARA POGI PA DIN KAHIT MASANGKOT SA ISKANDALO!

Mike A underwent chin liposuction, eyebag removal

By Fe Zamora

AT THE HEIGHT OF THE "JUETeng" scandal in May 2005, President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, underwent chin liposuction and blepharoplasty or eyebag removal for a youthful and relaxed appearance, an INQUIRER source said yesterday.

The medical procedure, which took almost two hours, was performed by cosmetic surgeon Dr. Raul Guanzon, with a cardiologist on stand-by and presidential guards "securing" the Web Jet building where Guanzon's clinic is located, the

MIKE A/A6

Senators say NBN probe could nail Abalos

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.,
Christian Esguerra
and Nikko Dizon

DESPITE PRESIDENT MACApagal-Arroyo's decision to suspend the National Broadband Network (NBN) project, senators want Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. to appear at the Senate probe so they can finally nail him.

Abalos is accused of brokering the $329-million deal with China's ZTE Corp. and of offering a $10-million bribe to Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, founder of a company that submitted an unsolicited proposal to undertake the project.

Abalos has denied brokering the deal and offering De Venecia a bribe.

Sen. Richard Gordon said the Senate inquiry could pin Abalos "who has been getting away with a lot of things," such as the botched P1.3-billion Mega Pacific contract to supply the Comelec with automated counting machines.

A Newsbreak magazine report said Abalos had offered Romulo Neri P200 million so that the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) would "help" with the ZTE deal. Neri was the director general of Neda before he was named chair of the Commission on Higher Education.

Neri would neither confirm nor deny having received the bribe offer.

The Senate investigation will resume on Wednesday with Neri and Abalos expected to attend. The committees conducted two hearings on the ZTE deal last week.

Senate President Manny Villar believes that Neri had "something big" to say about the NBN deal, which would explain the tight surveillance on him.

De Venecia said Neri was a key figure in the deal, being the head of Neda last year when it

SENATORS/A17

GMA tactic to avoid fighting on 2 fronts miscarries

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE ADMINISTRATION OF President Macapagal-Arroyo has suspended the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) project with China's ZTE Corp. in an attempt to contain the damage of an escalating corruption scandal that is dragging her husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, into its vortex.

The suspension was superfluous after the Supreme Court last week issued a temporary restraining order on the implementation of the NBN contract, denounced as overpriced and disadvantageous to the country.

It apparently was an action to seize the high ground and defuse yet another controversy following the Sept. 12 Sandiganbayan decision convicting former President Joseph Estrada of plunder and sentencing him to 40 years in prison.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said Ms Arroyo's decision to suspend the deal was prompted by "bad publicity."

The announcement came on the same day that Malacañang announced that Ms Arroyo was willing to grant an "absolute pardon" to Estrada to preempt threatened political unrest over the decision.

On the day the plunder decision came down, Ms Arroyo created an anticorruption body, the procurement Transparency Group, to monitor kickbacks in public infrastructure projects. The creation of the body sought to project an image of a President heeding the anticorruption message of the plunder verdict.

But within days of the Sandiganbayan decision, the corruption issue swiftly engulfed the administration.

GMA TACTIC/A17

Lapus rues suspension of CyberEd

By Kristine L. Alave

EDUCATION SECRETARY JESLI Lapus yesterday lamented the suspension of the Cyber Education Project (CEP), along with the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) deal, saying he felt sorry for the schoolchildren who stood to benefit from it.

"Even the children were hit. It is a pity," Lapus said. "The Philippines will again be delayed in the integration of education. That's inevitable."

Lapus said he was resigned to the suspension of the Depart-

LAPUS RUES/A13

DRENCHED
Buddhist monks march down a street in Rangoon (Yangon) as part of a campaign to push the release from house arrest of Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Monks launch largest demo vs Burma junta

RANGOON — EMBOLDENED after a march to see detained democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi, 20,000 people led by Buddhist monks on Sunday launched their biggest challenge yet to the ruling junta in Burma (Myanmar).

In the most serious challenge to the junta in nearly two decades, about 10,000 monks were joined for the first time by more than a hundred nuns and followed by about 10,000 supporters.

They marched in the pouring rain in Rangoon (Yangon) from the golden Shwedagon Pagoda, Burma's most important landmark, according to witnesses.

"We are marching for the people," the monks chanted. "We want the people to join us."

Earlier Sunday, about 300 monks held a prayer vigil for an hour in Magway town, 375 kilometers north of the commercial hub Rangoon, while about 500 monks also joined a protest in the central city of Mandalay.

In a surprise move, the military on Saturday allowed about 2,000 monks and civilians to pass through a roadblock and gather by the lakeside Rangoon house that has been Suu Kyi's prison for 12 of the past 18 years.

With tears in her eyes, the woman known in Burma as

MONKS LAUNCH/A12

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: LOUIE BACANI, PDI RESEARCH/09/04/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

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Edita Burgos takes case to UN

Flies to Geneva to bring plight of missing son before the world

THE MOTHER OF missing activist Jonas Burgos has filed a formal complaint with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearance (UN WGEID) in Geneva.

Edita Burgos, who blames the military for her son's disappearance, flew to Switzerland on Friday to seek the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in finding her son. She was accompanied by activists Marie Enriquez and Susan Cruz, and lawyer Edre Olalia, secretary general of the human rights group Karapatan.

In a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER, Olalia reported that Burgos had talked to Associate Human Rights Officer of the UN WGEID Claudia de la Fuente, who informed her that the matter would most likely be included in the agenda of the body's 3rd Session on Nov. 21-23.

The WGEID was established in 1980 by the Commission on Human Rights to assist families in determining the fate or whereabouts of their relatives who, having disappeared, were placed outside the protection of the law.

Jonas, son of press freedom icon Jose Burgos Jr., was abducted by armed men at a Quezon City mall on April 28. The license plate of the getaway vehicle, jotted down by security guards, was later traced to a vehicle that had been impounded by the 56th Infantry Batallion in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

If the complaint is accepted, the UN working group will call the attention of the Philippine government—a member of the UN Human Rights Council—and monitor developments in the case. An international fact-finding visit may also be scheduled.

Enriquez and Cruz also briefed the WGEID officer about the disappearance of many other activists and other serious human rights violations that continue in the Philippines. They highlighted the case of two University of the Philippines students, Sherryln Cadapan and Karen Empeno, who have been missing for more than a year.

De la Fuente, from Mexico, reportedly told the group that the UN still awaiting the Philippine government's response to its request last year for a country visit.

She also reportedly told them that while Jonas' case was pending before the Court of Appeals, the WGEID could issue a "reprisal letter" or prompt intervention as an interim measure in case of harassment of relatives or witnesses of the disappeared.

EDITA BURGOS (left) discusses the case of her missing son Jonas with **UN** official Claudia de la Fuente (right). Looking on is Marie Enriquez who accompanied Burgos to Geneva.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WHAT ELSE IS INSIDE

▨ FILIPINO professor bests 26 others to win int'l speech contest /A8

▨ RP PLAYS host to 2-day international conference on child protection /A9

▨ CONGRESSWOMAN reveals how hospitals are cheating gov't insurance program /A11

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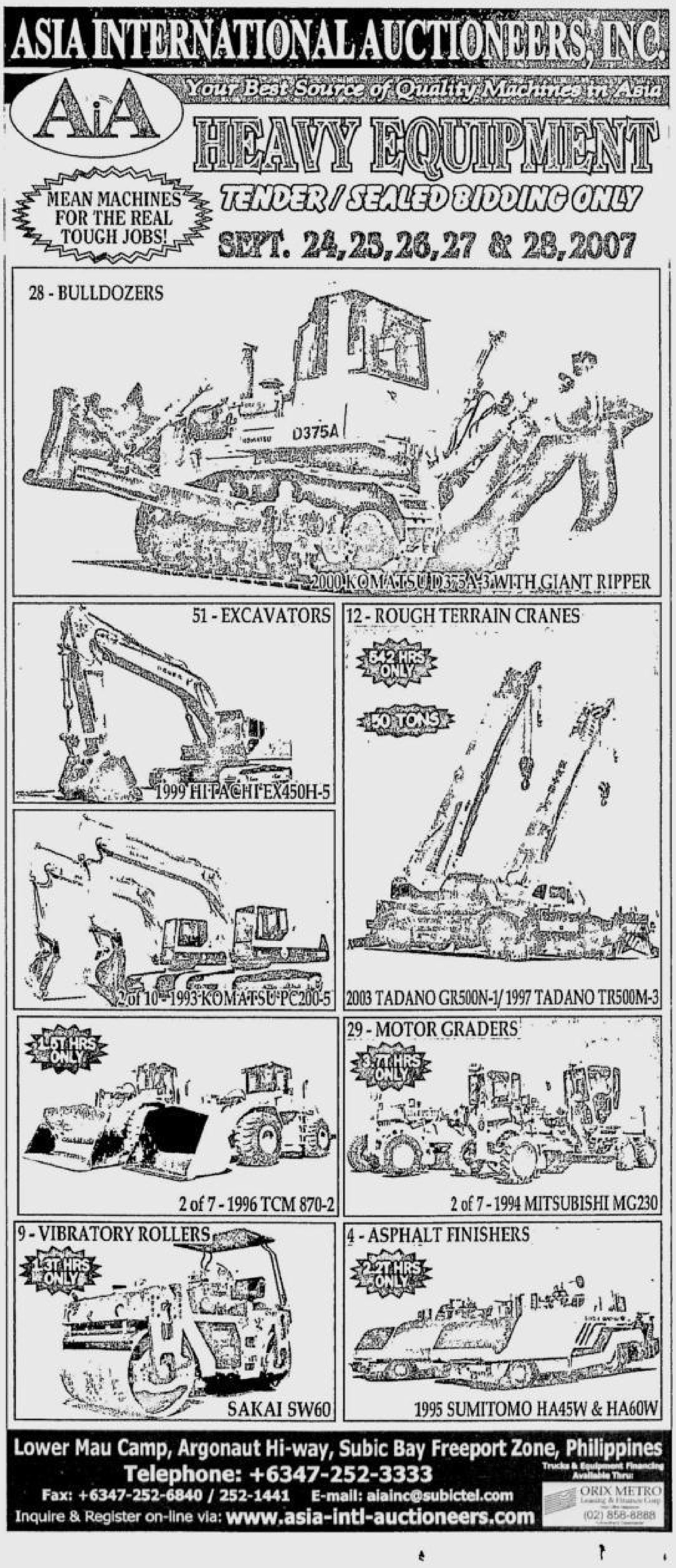
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GMA flying to New York for UN meet

AFTER A TUMULTUOUS WEEK THAT saw her moving quickly to defuse the politically-charged atmosphere brought about by a Senate inquiry into alleged corruption in a China-funded national broadband network deal, President Macapagal-Arroyo is off to New York this week to attend the annual United Nations General Assembly.

The President is expected to leave for the United States tomorrow evening and be back by Sept. 30.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the President is scheduled to address the UN General Assembly, take part in the Clinton Global Initiative Forum, as well as hold meetings with US business groups and the Filipino community in New York.

"After delivering the Philippines' Country Report to the General Assembly, she is also scheduled to meet with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to discuss a wide range of issues affecting the Philippines and Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)," Bunye said in his "View from the Palace" newspaper column.

"Before flying back to Manila, the President may drop in on a performance of her favorite international performer, Lea Salonga, who is playing Fantine in the Broadway musicale, Les Miserables," he said.

After her US trip, Ms Arroyo will be off again at the start of October, this time to China and India. Before the year ends, she will also go to Singapore, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The US trip is Ms Arroyo's seventh outside the country this year. *Christine O. Avendaño*

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Teodoro orders review of defense plan vs insurgents

By Nikko Dizon

DEFENSE SECRETARY GILBERto Teodoro Jr. has ordered the review and possible revision of the Defense Planning Guidance which contains the military guidelines for addressing the country's internal security threats.

"I have directed the department to revise or to study the revision of the document called the Defense Planning Guidance to reflect the realities in the field," Teodoro said in a speech at the Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC) forum last week.

He noted that the threats the country is facing are "ideological and political in nature which require new counter-measures."

The defense planning guidance, Teodoro explained, is a set of assumptions based on the defense department's and the military's assessment of conditions "which will occur normally in a six-year period of time," including planning for acquisitions for field operations.

It is prepared and regularly updated by the Department of National Defense and is geared toward the elimination of internal security threats.

Teodoro said his directive was not prompted by the debacles suffered by the Marines in July and August that claimed the lives of over 50 officers and enlisted men in Basilan.

In explaining the rationale for the review, Teodoro quoted British military historian Sir Michael Howard: "In structuring or preparing an Army for war, it is clear that he will not get it precisely right. But the important thing is not to be too far wrong so that you can put it right clearly."

Teodoro said a review of the defense document was brought about by the need to effectively address the country's internal security threats "so that the military could transition to a total external defense posture."

Teodoro said he had "instructed the defense team to provide constant feedback and a replanning process based on current internal and environmental threats."

'Undesirable' romeo faces deportation

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION has ordered the arrest of an Indian national for allegedly leaving his Filipino girlfriend after learning that she was pregnant with his baby.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan branded Gurninder Bhandal an "undesirable alien" and ordered his arrest on Sept. 13.

"The arrest stemmed from the complaint of Marygene Cervantes, who claimed that Bhandal had refused to support the child he [had fathered] with her," Libanan said.

Cervantes said in her complaint that she and Bhandal lived together from December 2006 to March 2007. He left her after learning of her pregnancy, she said.

Libanan said he ordered Bhandal's arrest and dispatched a team from the bureau's Law Enforcement Division (LED) to the Indian's residence in Pangasinan where he was reportedly living with a new girlfriend.

According to LED operations chief Wilfredo Poquez, Bhandal is undergoing deportation proceedings, "not only because of the complaint of his estranged lover, but also because he violently resisted arrest."

Poquez said Bhandal shouted invectives and fought with arresting officers before he was overpowered.

"He and his [new partner] continued to shout at my men, calling them kidnappers while they were being investigated in our Manila office," Poquez said.

"We are now verifying the couple's claim that Bhandal had been issued a temporary resident visa by the bureau, although this would not clear him of the charge of being an undesirable alien," he added. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

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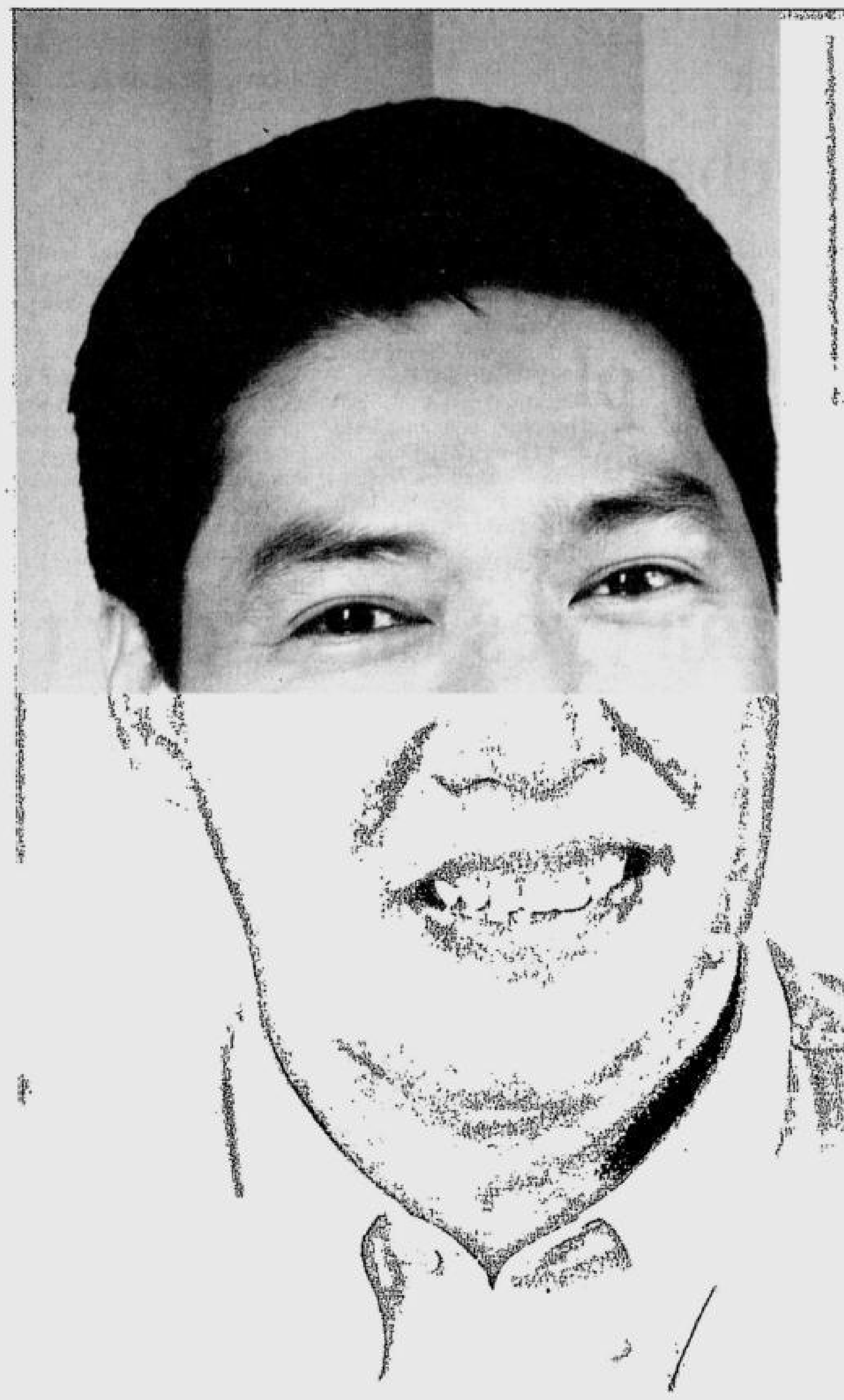

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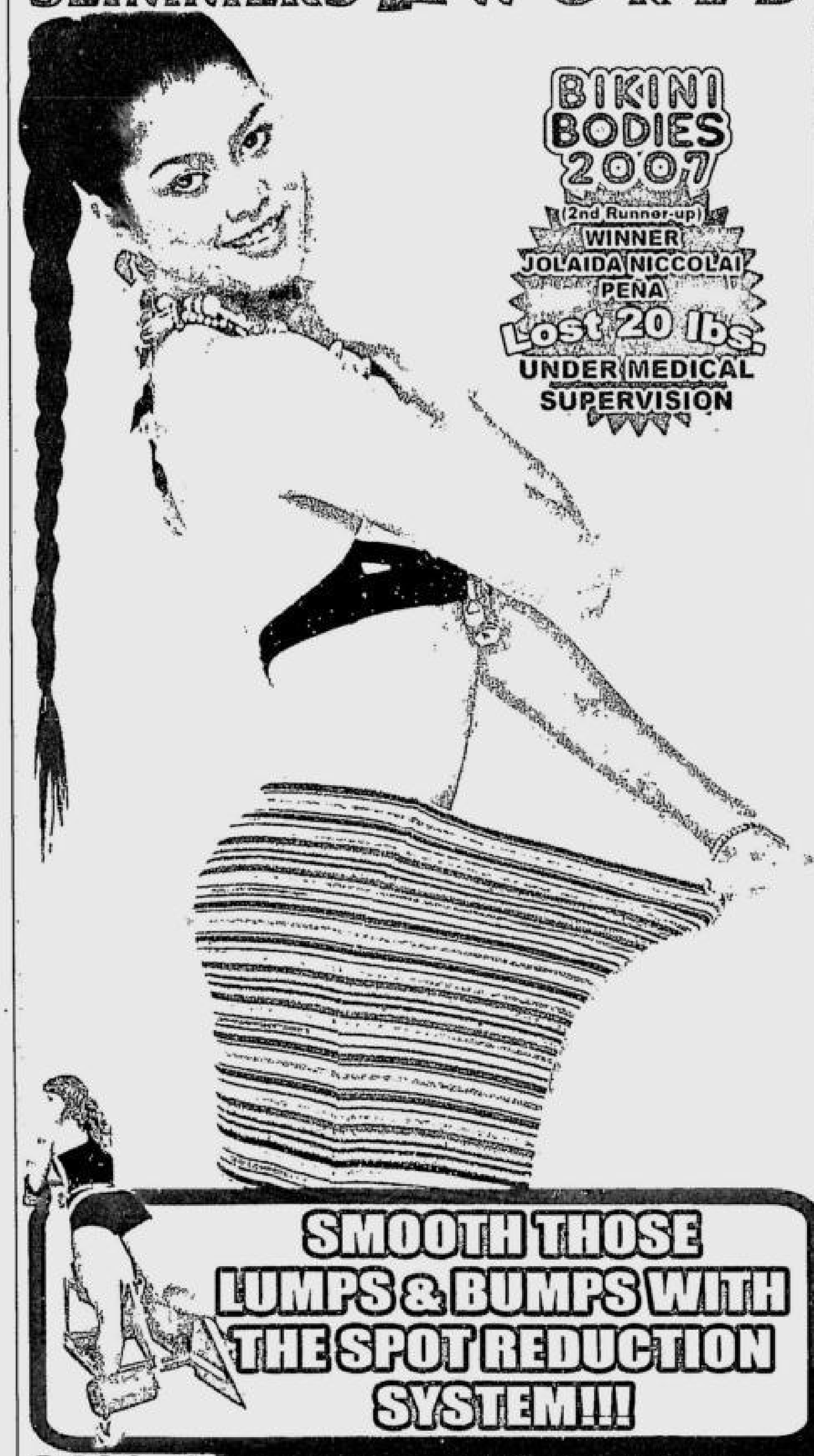

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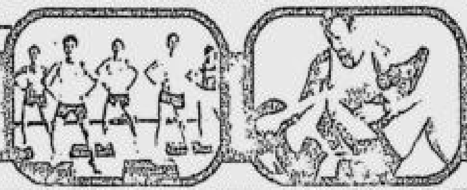

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Mike A underwent chin liposuction, eyebag removal

From page A1

source said.

As a matter of practice, Guanzon keeps the identities of his patients secret.

"If ever the President's husband had cosmetic surgery," Guanzon said in a phone interview on Saturday, "then he was just availing [himself] of something that many people want—that is to look better."

He added: "Liposuction and eyebag removal are popular procedures available to men and women who want to look better and younger."

Reports of Arroyo's cosmetic surgery were first leaked to the INQUIRER in 2005 by a source in the "beauty" industry, who also named Guanzon as Arroyo's personal cosmetic surgeon.

Guanzon admitted that he got "worried" when the story first came out, especially since the President's husband was in the eye of the jueteng scandal.

In fact, a few days after the surgery, Arroyo left for abroad "to cool off" while the scandal and the succeeding "Hello Garci" tape controversy rocked Manila.

The First Gentleman again left for abroad on Tuesday amid allegations that he had "bullied" businessman Jose de Venecia III, the son and namesake of Speaker Jose de Venecia, into withdrawing his bid for the $329-million National Broadband Network project.

At the Senate committee hearing, the young De Venecia said the President's husband told him to "back off" the project during a meeting at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in March, a month before Arroyo himself underwent high-risk open-heart surgery to repair a tear in the inner layer of his heart, followed by a triple bypass operation.

Arroyo's lawyer, Jesus Santos, confirmed the meeting in Wack Wack but denied De Venecia's allegation that the President's husband had interfered in favor of China's ZTE Corp.

De Venecia's company, Amsterdam Holdings Inc., had submitted an unsolicited bid for the contract.

Guanzon said a number of government officials, business executives, actors and starlets come to his clinic for cosmetic surgery, body scrubs, facials and therapeutic massage.

As a matter of policy, the surgeon stressed that he always "protected" his patients' requests for privacy. Which was why the Ilonggo surgeon was bothered when details of Arroyo's purported cosmetic surgery were "leaked" to the media in 2005.

China eyes Clark dev't

From page A1

not entail any cost to the government," he said, quoting her marching orders to the delegation.

Unlike the NBN deal with ZTE Corp., the money coming from CDB is not a "loan" but a direct investment. "We are promoting Chinese investment in the Philippines," Zhao said at the meeting.

The 2,500-hectare DMIA was rebuilt by the government from the military airport that the United States' 13th Air Force left behind at Clark Air Base following its closure in 1991. The closure came after the Senate rejected the extension of the 1947 Philippine-US Military Bases Agreement.

Eight Chinese firms are doing business at the Clark free port. At least six of the firms are in garments, while two are in tourism-related businesses, according to Clark Development Corp. (CDC).

The meeting in Beijing was also attended by officers of Synergy International Resources Group Co. Ltd., a consortium tapped to lay the groundwork for the development of the airport, envisioned as one of Ms Arroyo's legacy projects.

MOU signing

In ceremonies witnessed by Ms Arroyo, officials of CDC and the CIAC signed on April 4 at Clark a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the consortium for a feasibility study on the construction of new terminals.

Yuan Jing Xue, George Serrano and Edwin Ching signed on behalf of the consortium, while Luciano and Mangio signed for CIAC.

The consortium is made up of Beijing Urban Construction International Co. Ltd. (based in Beijing), Synergy International Resources Group Co. Ltd. (Makati), Sum Cheong Construction PTE Ltd. (Singapore), Liberty Builders and Development Corp. (Pasay) and Philippine Regional Investment Development Corp. (Quezon City), according to a copy of the MOU.

The Beijing Urban Construction Group (BUCG) is building the third terminal of the Beijing International Airport, which could accommodate 60 million passengers, in time for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. It is currently building an airport for the government of Yemen.

Another possible partner is China Airport Construction, which is known for building military runways in China. It has existing runway projects overseas.

Part of the policy of CDB is to create a structure that "would entail viability and bankability of any overseas cooperation."

Being an industrial zone, Clark would be a plus factor for the project's bankability, according to Zhao. "That's why we do not necessarily require a sovereign guarantee. It's not a precondition," he said.

A "flexible credit structure" and consideration of other economics that play a role in the project are part of CDB's approach to overseas investment, Zhao said.

During the more than half-an-hour meeting in his office, Zhao said thrice that the investment CDB was committed to facilitate was "not help, but a fórm of cooperation."

Asked after the meeting if China was playing the role of a "big brother" to the Philippines, Zhao said: "No, not a big brother.

"We are facilitators. We try to see the overall situation and work on a condition that would be mutually and bilaterally beneficial for the two countries. The two economies match. It's not somebody helping somebody. It's cooperation," he said.

Loan by consortium

Yuan, Synergy chair, said possible financing from China would be coursed through the consortium.

"It is an investment from the People's Republic of China through a consortium that we head and this consortium will have the full financial backing from CDB. This consortium will be accountable directly to the bank," Yuan said.

Luciano called the arrangement a loan.

"The consortium will be the one to bear the loan," he said at Clark free port on Thursday.

Luciano said "nothing was wrong" with the plan because it was a "variant" of the build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme.

The proposed project calls for a build-lease-transfer (BLT) arrangement.

Under the BLT scheme, CIAC would lease the DMIA from the consortium under "very soft" financial terms of up to 50 years, according to Yuan.

The new DMIA is envisioned to replace the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) in Manila, serve as the premier international gateway to the Philippines and become the main logistics hub in Asia-Pacific by the year 2015, according to Yuan.

"Naia has a total area of 600 hectares that is now very congested with an annual passenger capacity of only 9 million. DMIA is four times Naia's size," Yuan said.

What the consortium did was submit an unsolicited proposal to undertake a feasibility study, according to Luciano.

The MOU did not bind the CIAC to appoint the consortium for the project, he said.

The CIAC president said no agreement was reached at the Sept. 14 meeting with CDB officials. "It was purely exploratory," he said.

"The [CDB] governor said the prospect of getting a loan was still subject to the cash flow of the project like the number of passengers annually, etc.," Luciano said.

The loan can have a maturity period of 20 years. "The funding will not come from the government or be shouldered by CIAC. It needs no sovereign guarantee fund from the government," Luciano said.

Second meeting

The meeting on Sept. 14 in Beijing was the second between Zhao and Mangio, who first came to Beijing in March.

After the March meeting, the MOU between CIAC and Synergy was signed for the feasibility study for the development of DMIA.

As early as April, CDB had expressed a willingness to support the project under a BOT scheme with an indication of a "20-year-or-more credit moratorium" on the part of the direct borrower, which, in this case, is the consortium represented by Synergy.

Zhao said CDB's financing would be very competitive and even flexible. "If we are comfortable with the project, the terms of payment could also be adjusted from 20 years or more," he said.

After the MOU signing, Ms Arroyo instructed CIAC to see to it that the feasibility study would be completed by Oct. 3.

Serrano said the feasibility study would be completed by Sept. 28.

Zhao made it clear that CDB wanted to see the feasibility study first.

"Releasing the money is not a problem. It could happen soon, but we want to see the feasibility study first to be able to assure the bankability of the project," and thereby ensure mutual benefits for China and the Philippines.

Speaking for the Philippine delegation, Mangio said that "since the departure of the US military more than a decade ago, the full potential of Clark as an economic zone has yet to be fully realized.

"The Philippines is very fortunate to get a taste of how China managed to rise in the geopolitical and economic order by being one of the beneficiaries of [its] cooperation in many areas of development, like infrastructure, mining, telecommunications and alternative energy exploration," he said.

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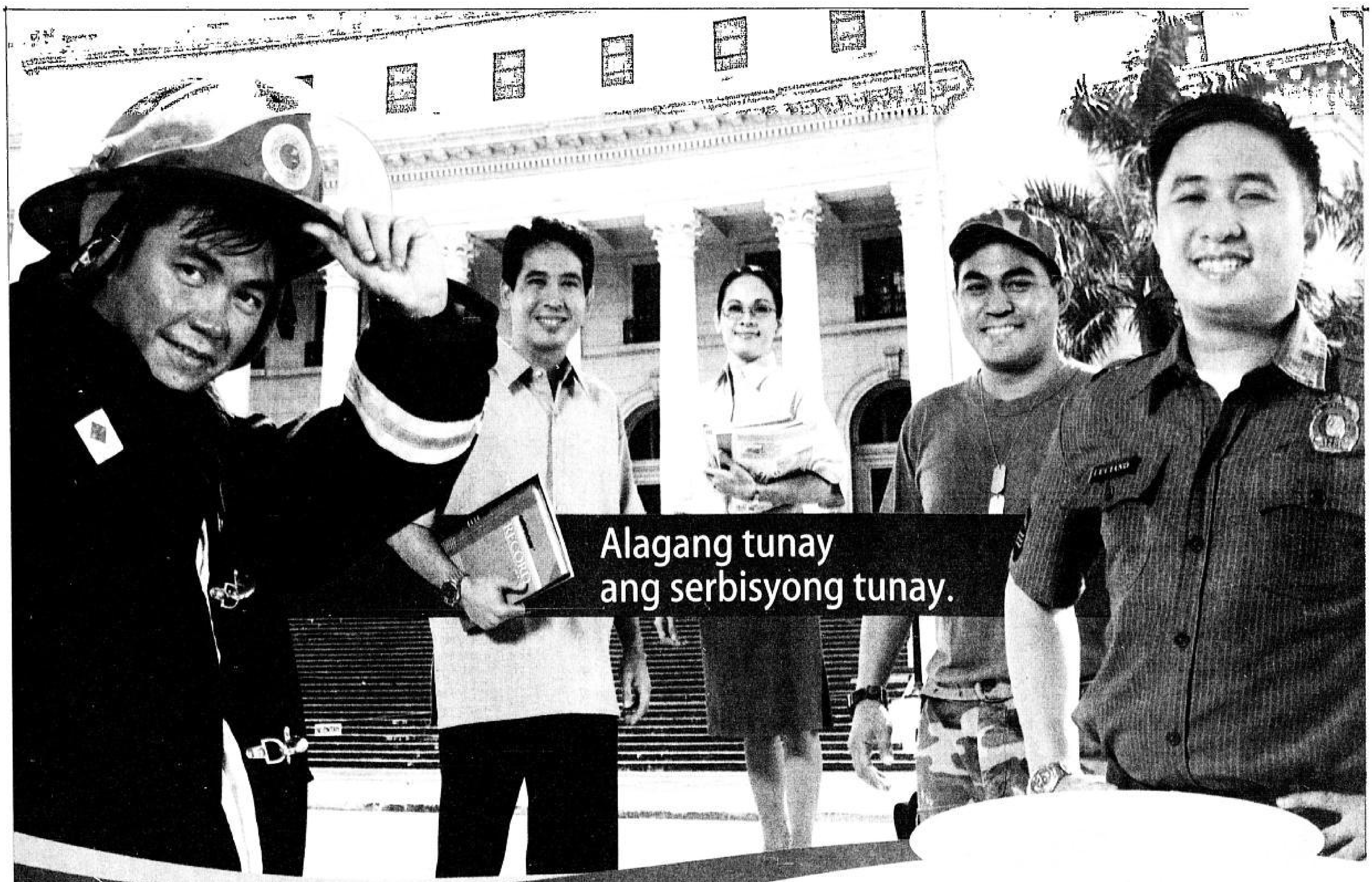

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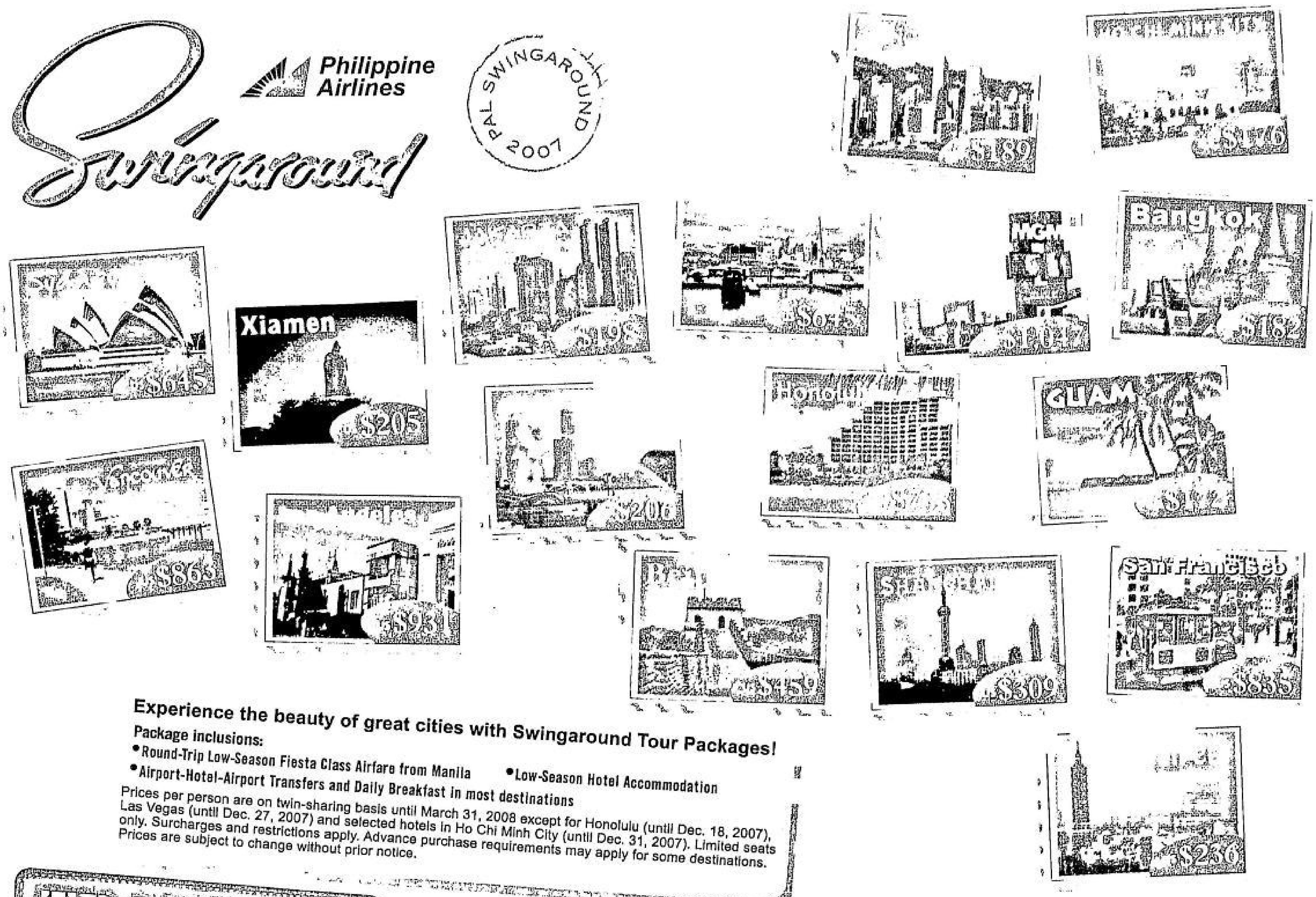

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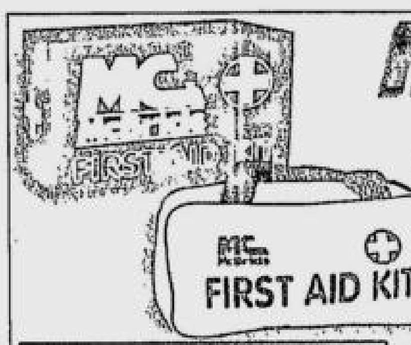
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Pinay prof wins world speech tilt

LEGAZPI CITY—A state university professor from Bicol bagged the championship in a world speech competition held on Sept. 13 in Indianapolis, Indiana, besting participants from 26 other countries including Australia and the United States.

Dr. Ramona Bustamante-Rañeses, a 58-year-old speech and theater arts teacher at Bicol University and a native of Oas, Albay, said she was very happy to have earned the honor for her country, region and hometown.

Rañeses recalled how the seven members of her delegation rejoiced when the Philippines was proclaimed the champion, followed by Australia, with the United States placing third.

The contestants, presented with the topic, "Your life, your responsibility," were asked to give a seven-minute speech using any strategy.

The speech contest was one of the highlights of the 37th World Convention of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the oldest continuing nonsectarian women's organization in the world which takes a strong stance against the influence of alcohol on families and society.

Rañeses, in her speech, said: "We have to be agents of change to bring out a beautiful world for mankind and we can do this by bringing forth to the world children who are healthy, vibrant, active, intelligent and beautiful. This can be done by avoiding involvement with smoking, alcoholism and drugs (SAD)."

She also cited the occurrence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) or permanent birth defects in the offspring of women who drank alcohol while pregnant.

RAÑESES

Rañeses said she started preparing for the competition a year ago when she was informed that she would represent the country.

She made 10 revisions of her draft until she was happy with her final manuscript.

"After discussing the ills of SAD, I ended my speech with a resolution, like, 'I resolve to give more time to my children... to pay attention to the needs of my children... to be always around whenever my children need my help,'" she said.

Rañeses said winning the competition wasn't easy.

"Speech contests are difficult to win, especially if they are held in western countries and the native tongue of the other contestants is English," she said.

Rañeses, a speech and theater arts teacher for 37 years and a mother of nine children, holds a doctorate degree in English from the University of Santo Tomas and is currently a senior law student at Arellano University. *Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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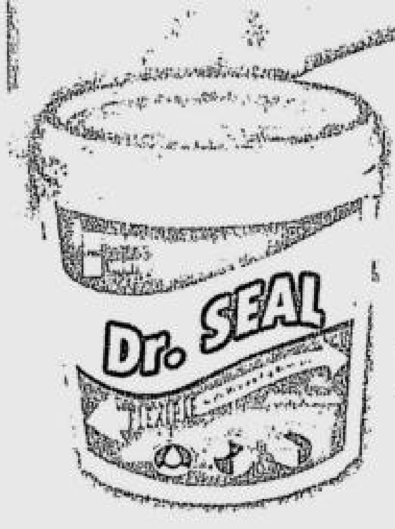

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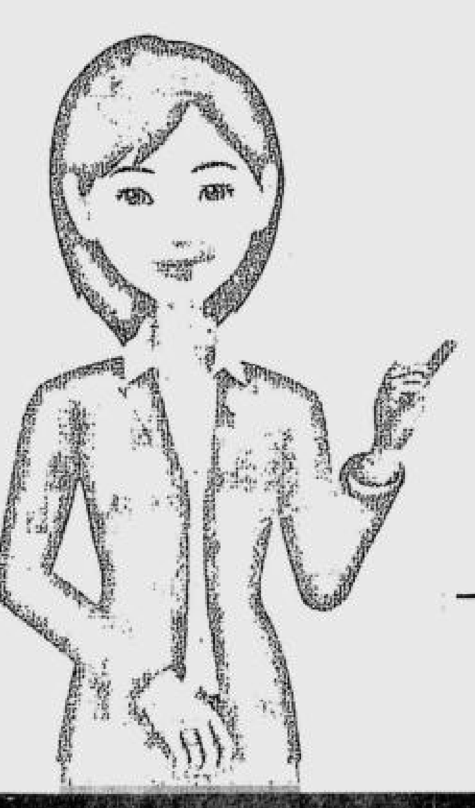
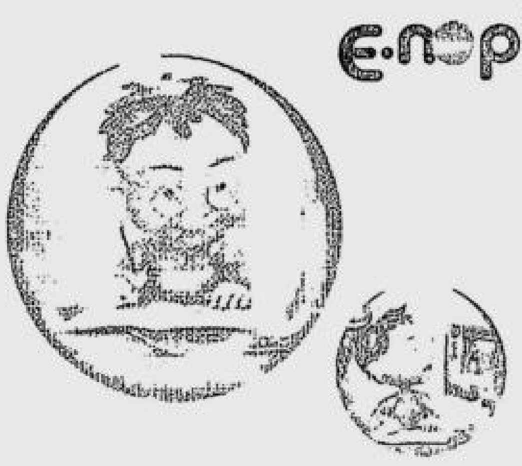

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RP hosts int'l meet on protecting kids

By Tarra Quismundo

WITH UNPRECEDENTED INTERNATIONAL support, Manila will host the largest regional child protection conference that will gather together close to 700 child advocates from around the world.

The two-day 7th Asian Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) opens today at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza hotel in Pasay City.

Organizers said it would be the most diverse gathering of international child protection professionals and advocates.

The biennial meet, organized this year by the Philippines' Child Protection Unit-Network (CPU-Net), will be attended by some 675 participants, including judges, lawyers, doctors, law enforcers and social workers, from 37 countries around Asia, Europe, North America and Africa.

Experts will hold working group and plenary sessions around the theme "Ako Para sa Bata (I am for the Child)," including the multilateral sharing of core issues such as child trafficking, children in armed conflict and natural disasters, child-friendly judicial reforms, and the involvement of media in promoting child protection.

"This is the first time for an Asian conference where so many foreigners will participate. Normally, conferences are attended mostly by local child protection professionals," said lawyer Katrina Legarda, CPU-Net legal consultant and organizing committee chair.

More than a third of this year's participants will be foreign delegates, exceeding previous conferences where more than 75 percent of the registrants were locals, Legarda said. Previous ISPCAN conferences were hosted by Singapore and Hong Kong, among other places.

The conference is supported by international pro-child organizations such as the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund, Plan International, Save the Children and the British Embassy in Manila.

Philippine nongovernment organization Consuelo Foundation and the Philippine Daily Inquirer had also signed up to help the organizers from CPU-Net, an organization of women lawyers, doctors and social workers involved in training policemen, prosecutors and judges in handling cases involving children.

"I think it's indicative of the awareness of the needs of children. It's no longer a localized matter. And from the international perspective, there's a lot of interest on how to address the problem of child-trafficking, which is the world's number-one industry now," Legarda told the INQUIRER.

"And I also attribute the attendance to the fact that we have a very scientific program in terms of content, and because we had worked with many different organizations before and they are all here to show us support," she added.

During the conference, participants will brainstorm on common international goals such as establishing a regional child protection policy for Asia, "influencing public policy" for a child-friendly judicial system, and child abuse prevention, among other aims.

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British School Manila marks 30 years in RP

THE BRITISH SCHOOL MANILA (BSM), AN international school that provides education for British and non-British students alike, is celebrating its 30th anniversary in the country on Sept. 27.

Located in University Park at Bonifacio Global City in Taguig, the school has about 700 students representing 43 nationalities.

According to school head Chris Mantz, BSM is the only school in the Philippines and one of only 200 worldwide to have been accredited by the Council of International Schools.

"The school is proud of this award. There are thousands of international schools around the world, but accreditation status confirms that British School Manila is among the best," said Mantz.

BSM started out in 1976 with just two classrooms and 32 students. It has moved to three campuses—from Legaspi Village to Merville to Bonifacio Global City—in the past 30 years.

BSM uses the British curriculum with some modifications to reflect its multicultural student body. It takes in students aged three to 18 and offers a total of 15 years of education. Students take the National Curriculum Tests at ages 7, 11 and 14, the General Certificate Secondary Education (GCSE) and the International Baccalaureate.

The IB provides entrance to the best universities in the world, according to school officials.

Neil Mahoney, coordinator of the IB program, said their IB have performed very well in examinations given near the end of the second year. He said an increasing number of university representatives have been visiting the school to offer places to top BSM students.

The GCSE qualifies students at age 16 to study in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

"Over the past five years our results at GSCE level have placed us among the top independent schools in the United Kingdom. Last year the results would have placed us 75th in the UK from a total of 5,000 schools. The BSM regularly equals or beats UK national averages," Mantz said. *Cynthia D. Balana*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, September 24, 2007
25th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Ezra 1:1-6
Gospel: Luke 8:16-18

Jesus said to his disciples, "No one, after lighting a lamp covers it with a bowl or puts it under the bed; rather he puts it on a lampstand so that people coming in may see the light. In the same way, there is nothing hidden that shall not be uncovered; nothing kept secret that shall not be known clearly. Now, take care how well you listen, for whoever produces will be given more, but from those who do not produce, even what they seem to have will be taken away from them."

Commentary

Ezra tells the history of the people who come back from exile and strangely enough it is a foreign king, Cyrus of Persia who allows the Jews to return, to go back and rebuild the temple to their God and to once again dwell in their land. The exiles go back and bring all they have acquired and made in the land where many of them have flourished. It is amazing that Cyrus was inspired by God—there. is only one God—and God inspires all men and women in the world towards goodness, unity, and life with dignity and freedom.

Each person is called to be a light, not hidden but displayed, so that it can be used by anyone who needs it. We are to be the light of Christ in the world—and that light, that truth, exposes everything and what each person does with the inspiration that God gives to him/her. And there will be a reckoning when all will know what each has done with their knowledge and gifts from the Lord. How much has been given to us who have known Jesus the Word of God made flesh? How many have we shared/given back to others?

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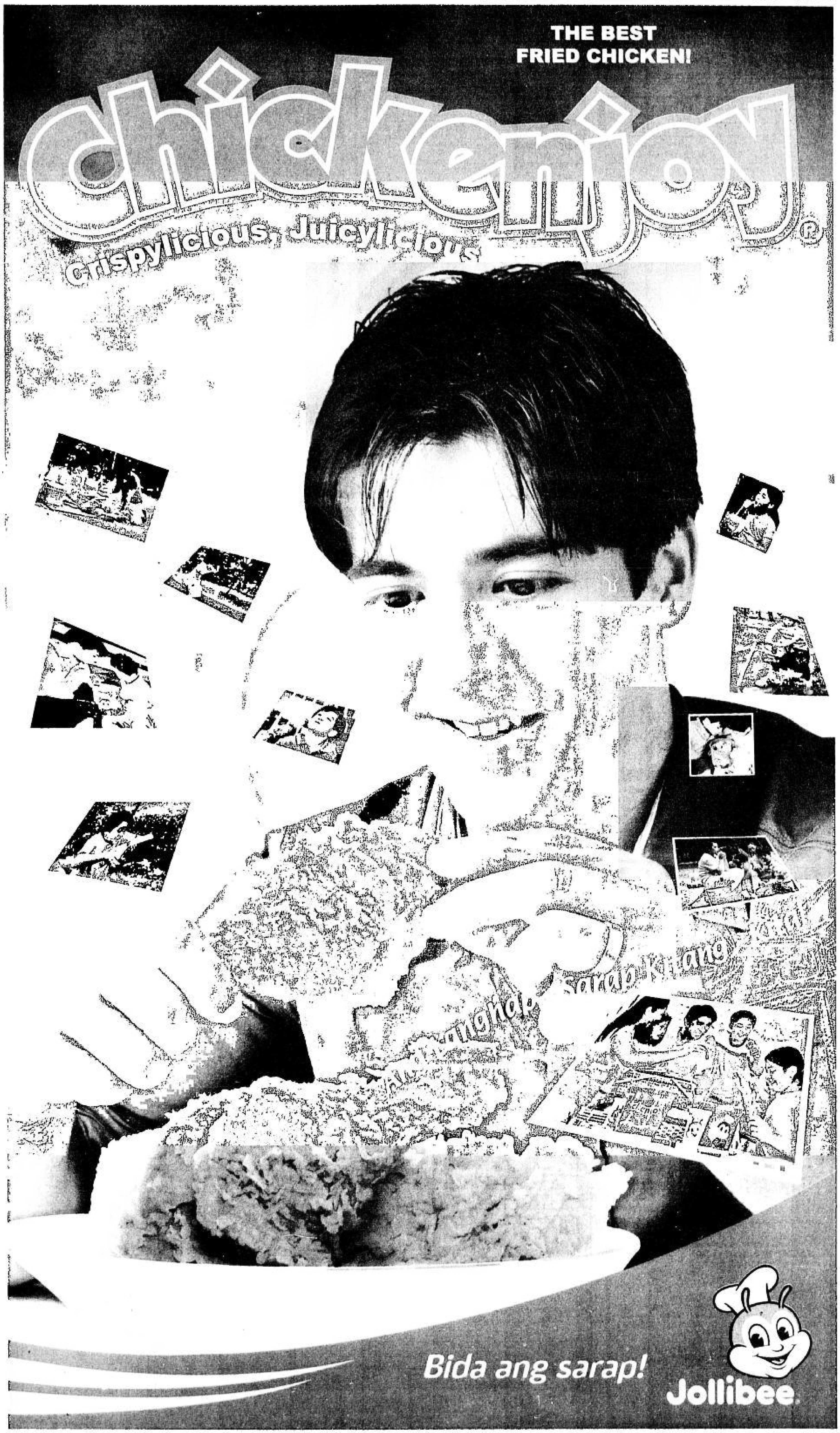

Heart Center chief not off the hook

By Jocelyn R. Uy

STATE PROSECUTORS won't let Philippine Heart Center Director Ludgerio Torres off the hook just yet.

In a 21-page petition, the Office of the Special Prosecutor has asked the Sandiganbayan First Division to reverse its resolution clearing Torres of seven criminal charges in connection with the release of over P700,000 in hospital funds on the basis of fake tax documents in 2000.

"The prosecution does not agree with the findings of the court…the offenses against the accused should not be dismissed because he has to explain his side in a full-blown trial…," said OSP Director Raymundo Olaguer.

The Sandiganbayan cleared Torres last month, saying it lacked probable cause to indict the hospital director.

The court had ruled that the loss was caused through "the intervention of fraud."

But the antigraft court upheld the indictments against then PHC deputy director for administrative services Zylma Sanchez, former legal officer Adonis Mella and Quezon City treasurer's office clerk Edna Cruz.

Last year, the Office of the Ombudsman lodged complaints of graft, malversation of public funds and falsification of public documents against Torres and the three others for allegedly authorizing the release of P714,708.75 under a fake tax memorandum-assessment.

The payments covered the transfer of a 2.7-hectare lot owned by the Government Service Insurance System.

In his motion for reconsideration, Olaguer argued that Torres should prove his innocence with concrete evidence and "not by self-serving testimony alone because the evidence against him is strong and convincing at this stage."

Records showed that Torres ordered the purchase of a manager's check in the amount of P3.2 million payable to the Quezon City treasurer's office in December 2000 to cover the transfer tax based on a first assessment by the city assessor's office.

The check, however, was returned to the PHC along with an offer of an alternative assessment from Mella. This was later found to be fraudulent.

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Solon bares how hospitals rip off Philhealth

By Christian V. Esguerra

THERE WAS SOMETHING AMISS ABOUT one medical mission in Iloilo.

Barangay officials purportedly representing a private hospital were offering residents of far-flung areas free trips to the hospital in another province for cataract operations. All they needed, they were told, was their Philippine Health Insurance Corp. card.

For those not enrolled in the government health insurance program, the representatives—known in insurance circles as "seekers"—offered to shoulder the quarterly premium of P300.

Not only that, their meals during the trip and operation would be taken care of.

"It was too good to be true," said Iloilo Rep. Janette Garin during the subcommittee hearing on the proposed P16.2-billion budget of the Department of Health for 2008.

So what was the catch?

Garin, a medical doctor, said some private companies—through "seekers"—were enjoying hefty returns on their "investment" by submitting enormous claims to Philhealth, a government-owned corporation.

Based on documents she obtained from Philhealth, Garin cited the case of one Bacolod hospital that purportedly overcharged Philhealth by more than 200 percent for a simple cataract procedure.

Garin said the hospital made claims of around P30,000 for each eye operation. In an interview with the INQUIRER after the hearing last Thursday, Garin said a cataract operation cost only around P7,000.

She said the racket could be happening in other parts of the country as well.

With an estimated 2,000 cataract operations performed annually, the hospital could be raking in as much as P60 million, according to the lawmaker.

Garin said the amount could easily shoot up since the same hospital had opened two facilities in Iloilo and Mindanao .

"We're only talking about cataract operations," she told the health officials present led by Health Secretary Francisco Duque III. "What more for other illnesses."

Garin said the practice of jacking up Philhealth claims would eventually bleed the insurance program dry.

Quoting from the Philhealth documents, she said four doctors alone put in claims totaling P5 million in six months. She noted that regular claims submitted for the same period were usually only for between P150,000 and P300,000.

Duque confirmed the practice of some hospitals and medical missions using "seekers."

"They (doctors) cast their net on indigents and pay for their premiums and operate on them," he said.

Duque said the government had tried to correct the situation by implementing the "regularity of contribution" rule where a Philheath member could undergo surgery only after nine months from the initial premium payment.

"I know it's a difficult and ambitious statement to say that we will completely get rid of all these shenanigans," he said. "(But) we assure the congresspersons (sic) that Philhealth has been working to curb, if not, eliminate (the practice)."

Garin said the issue also involved the safety of medical procedures done in hospitals involved in the racket.

She said about 10 cases of patients going blind had been reported in her province as a result of the medical missions. She said there were also cases where "seekers" had brought in—not cataract patients—but those who had glaucoma.

De la Paz heads int'l body

THE HEADS OF SOCIAL SECURITY ORGANIzations from 154 countries have elected Corazon de la Paz of the Social Security System to a second term as president of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), it was announced by SSS officials in the Philippines.

De la Paz, the SSS president and chief executive officer, was first elected president of ISSA in 2004, according to SSS executive vice president Horacio Templo.

He said De La Paz, who was reelected unopposed during the ISSA general assembly held in Moscow on Sept. 15, will serve another three-year term as the first woman, non-European and Asian to head the organization.

"President De la Paz's reelection is further proof of her integrity and competence not only as head of the SSS but also as a leader in their international scene," Templo said.

ISSA, which works closely with the International Labor Organization, is comprised of 365 social security organizations in 154 countries. It provides a world forum for social security issues.

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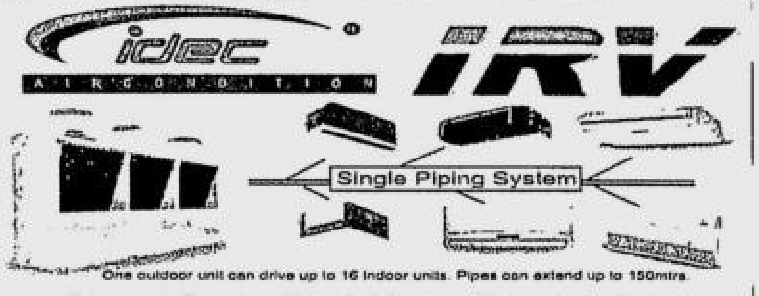
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Monks launch largest demo against Burma junta

From page A1

"The Lady" waved at the monks as they recited Buddhist prayers, while supporters chanted: "Long life and health for Aung San Suu Kyi, may she have freedom soon."

The 62-year-old woman has become an internationally recognized symbol of peaceful political change since her National League for Democracy won the 1990 elections by a landslide—a result never recognized by the military.

The military appeared to be taking precaution against a similar encounter on Sunday, beefing up security in the neighborhood around Suu Kyi's home.

One underground Buddhist group calling itself the All Burma Monks Alliance called for nationwide prayer vigils starting Sunday—the latest peaceful action against the military rulers since an Aug. 15 surge in fuel prices.

"We all, Burmese monks and people, are facing great difficulties and many problems," a spokesperson of the alliance told Agence France Presse. "We are trying to continue protesting until we get our freedom."

What began as a protest against economic hardship has now swelled, with marches against military rule attracting thousands of young monks to the streets of Rangoon and other cities since Tuesday.

Quandary

The military—which has ruled Burma since 1962—now faces a quandary, according to analysts.

Launching a violent and public crackdown on deeply revered monks would outrage people in Burma and the international community, but doing nothing at all leaves the military regime vulnerable.

"If they crack down seriously on the monks, it means it would also seriously inflame the rest of the population, including members of the military themselves for attacking the sacred and very prestigious institution," said Debbie Stothard, of Thailand-based democracy pressure group Altsean Burma.

"So the military regime is really in a lose-lose situation," Stothard said.

The junta normally does not tolerate the slightest show of public dissent, and authorities during the past month have arrested more than 150 people.

Win Min, a Burmese academic who lectures at Thailand's Chiang Mai University, said that allowing monks to visit Suu Kyi was a sign that the junta sought a nonviolent conclusion to the protests.

Whether the junta's decision on Saturday will eventually defuse tensions or further galvanize monks remains to be seen. But the protest marches on Sunday appeared to swell, rather then burn out.

Int'l pressure

As protests intensify against the military rulers in Burma, world leaders at the UN General Assembly are expected to push the ruling junta to adopt democratic reforms.

The United States and the European Union are expected to spearhead a diploma
the annual gathering
to lend support to
democratic campaig
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Southeast Asian sta
ing to diplomats.

Estrada to accept absolute parc

From page A1

would involve no admission of guilt, if Malacañang offered it to him.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said Estrada's guilt was not an issue President Macapagal-Arroyo should be concerned about, and added that he would meet Estrada on Wednesday to discuss the matter.

"We are not concerned with the issue of guilt … We are concerned with the issue of national interest … We don't need him to admit guilt,'" Puno said, noting that this was, after all, a "judicial issue."

Estrada, who was convicted of plunder and sentenced to a maximum 40 years in prison by the Sandiganbayan, had previously said that "if ever" he would accept a pardon, it must be unconditional and definitely should not include an admission of guilt.

Asked yesterday if he would welcome such an offer once Ms Arroyo made it formal, the ousted leader said: "*Puwede* (Probably). Of course. I already sacrificed for six years."

Speaking to the INQUIRER on the phone, Estrada also stressed: "I am more concerned now about my mother. I just need to be with her in the last few months. You know how close I am to her."

Estrada's 102-year-old mother, Mary Ejercito, has been confined at the San Juan Medical Center since Aug. 10. She is now connected to life-sustaining machines due to her deteriorating con

But Estrada reiterat
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Guilt not an issue

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convicting him of plund

He said Estrada was
"total vindication."

FVR surprised

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Ramos yesterday sa
"premature" of Mala
discuss the possi
clemency for Estrada.

"An executive clem
not be given by the C
tive while the judicial
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Ex-Isafp chief also unhappy about suspension

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE COUNTRY'S FORMER TOP SPY, REtired Brig. Gen. Victor N. Corpus, is unhappy that his brainchild, the Cyber Education Project (CEP), has been suspended by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"It's a very good project. Unfortunately, it was dragged down by a notorious project," Corpus said, referring to the National Broadband Network (NBN) project with China's ZTE Corp. that Ms Arroyo shelved on Saturday.

"I hope the President will not scrap it altogether because if only the people can appreciate the concept behind the project, they would know how helpful it would be to the masses," said Corpus, former chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

He told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that he broached to Ms Arroyo as early as 2001 the idea of distance learning, or the use of satellites, television and computers to teach Filipinos beyond the reach of the brick-and-mortar education system.

"My theory is that we cannot solve the problem of insurgency via military means. We need to trace the root of the problem, which is poverty. And the best way to address this is to empower the poor by giving them access to quality education," he said.

Cyber education is the most feasible way to "give quality education by bringing the teachers from the best schools down to the village level," said Corpus, who is now leading the propagation of jatropha plants as alternative fuel.

He said his proposal had gained broad support not only from Ms Arroyo but her entire Cabinet as well. The plan was even taken up along with other projects during US President George W. Bush's state visit to the Philippines in October 2003.

"During that visit, President Bush promised to donate $23 million or $24 million for Mindanao. We were banking on the money to finance our distance learning project. But when the Philippines withdrew its troops from Iraq the following year, the US also withdrew its financial support for the project," said Corpus.

He later approached then National Economic and Development Authority Director General Romulo Neri to keep the project alive.

Warming up to China

With the Philippines warming up to China in the last three years, the CEP was picked up by Beijing for financing and investment along with railways, broadband and housing projects.

"I'm really saddened by how the project has become tied to a notorious (NBN) project. While the President might be right in putting the project up for review, she should not just scrap it just because of the scandal. It's a good concept, it would be a waste if we just drop it," Corpus said.

The CEP has been tied to the ZTE deal largely because both were proposed for funding through Chinese loans.

The Freedom from Debt Coalition has criticized the CEP's $406-million cost as bloated and unnecessary, saying it would use a very expensive satellite transmission medium to beam its education programs nationwide.

Some critics were skeptical of the CEP's effectiveness in educating students in depressed areas, while others felt that the funds would be put to better use building schools, hiring more teachers and buying more school equipment and books.

Lapus rues suspension of CyberEd

From page A1

ment of Education (DepEd) initiative, saying President Macapagal-Arroyo had "compelling bilateral and local reasons" to suspend the projects.

'Unfortunate'

He said it was "unfortunate" that lawmakers lumped the CEP with the $329-million broadband contract with Chinese firm ZTE Corp., even though the projects were different from each other.

The NBN and the CEP use different technology and have a distinct clientele base and public standing, Lapus said. The CEP uses satellite technology to connect computers, while the NBN employs terrestrial technology, he noted.

"From our limited standpoint in the DepEd, we are, of course, disheartened, but we'll continue to prepare the way for the inevitable, open and distance learning, for our country's future," Lapus said.

He added that the socioeconomic benefit of the initiative was higher than its cost. Through the CEP, the government would incur savings on teacher training, textbooks and communication, he said.

Teacher competence

"This will increase the professional competencies of the teachers," Lapus said, adding that several organizations of teachers and principals had expressed support for the CEP. "They are excited," he added.

The CEP aims to connect all schools throughout the country to a nationwide network that will provide 12 video channels, wireless wide-area networking, local area networking and wireless Internet connectivity.

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Around 38,000 schools or 90 percent of all public schools nationwide are expected to be connected in the next three years.

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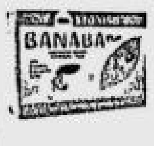

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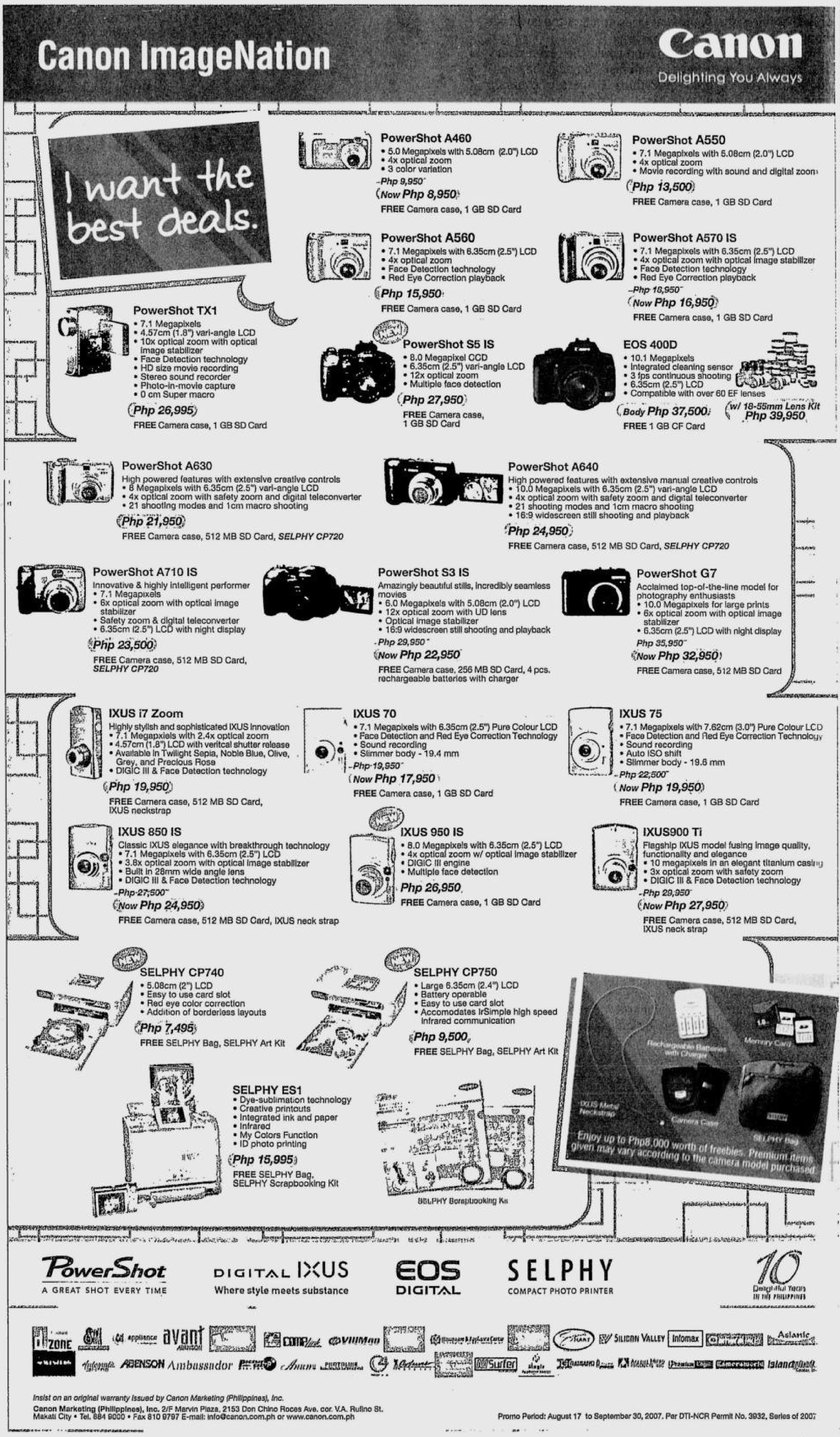

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Probe deeper

EDITORIAL

THE DECISION TO "SUSPEND" WHAT TRADE SECretary Peter Favila rather defensively called the "much-talked-about and much-maligned broadband project" (as well as the other controversial Chinese-funded initiative, the Cyber Education Project) is an obvious attempt to pull the rug from under the Senate committees investigating the allegedly anomalous deal.

In making the announcement on Saturday, Favila was accompanied by Acting Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera, who suggested, most tellingly, that perhaps the Senate investigation was no longer necessary. "What more can they [the senators] ask when everything has been answered and explained? It's my personal opinion that everything has been covered."

We're glad she hedged her answer by qualifying it as her personal opinion, because if it were her department's official opinion, we would have reason to ask the government's chief lawyer to resign her brief.

By no stretch of the imagination could the seven-hour hearing at the Senate session hall last Thursday be considered to have "covered" everything. (Unless, of course, "cover" means "cover up.") Many questions are begging to be asked. What kind of lawyer has Devanadera become, if she suggests that these questions have not only been asked, they have been definitively answered?

The suspension of the ZTE arrangement (or "contract in the process of becoming," as Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile described the controversial document regarding the proposed National Broadband Network last Thursday) will lead to its cancellation; but is the suspension (a cancellation, so to speak, in the process of becoming) enough reason to conclude the Senate investigation?

Not for all the tea in China. If anything, the decision to suspend the arrangement should embolden the senators, on both sides of the aisle, to get to the bottom of the controversy.

We all already know this, but for the benefit of Solicitor General Devanadera, let us list down a few of the questions that **must** be asked, and that **must** be answered to the satisfaction of the Senate and the people, in the next hearing.

First, and most important: Why is Commission on Elections Chairman Benjamin Abalos brokering for ZTE? Even the most elastic testimony last Thursday, that of Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, cannot disguise the unusual interest Abalos has shown in ZTE's proposal. Assistant Secretary Lorenzo Formoso would have us believe that he and businessman Jose "Joey" de Venecia III discussed NBN business under Abalos' benign and disinterested gaze; perhaps he is merely protecting himself, but the mere fact that the discussion took place right in Abalos' office in the Comelec, and in Abalos' presence, is on its face already questionable. Considering what others involved in the project, however peripherally, have said about Abalos' interest, Formoso's characterization of Abalos' role in those fateful meetings becomes highly suspect. If Abalos went out of his way to discuss the NBN project with Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, the Senate must determine the scope and extent of the Comelec chairman's interest in the ZTE deal.

Second, glaring discrepancies exist between Mendoza's testimony and the young De Venecia's. Who, in fact, is telling the truth? Even a simple matter like who introduced whom must be resolved: Did Speaker Jose de Venecia in fact introduce his son to Mendoza for the first time early this year, as Mendoza claims? Did Mendoza in fact organize a "reconciliatory" meeting between "the old man" (Abalos) and the De Venecia scion? Did a waiter at the Wack-Wack club house in fact witness the alleged "Back off!" incident, where Jose Miguel Arroyo allegedly tried to intimidate the young De Venecia? (This is Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's call, and we hope, for the sake of the waiter and his family, that he had thought it through before making the announcement during the first hearing.)

Third, what did President Macapagal-Arroyo know, and when did she know it? Even without Abalos' impeachable involvement, the ZTE "contract" remains suspect. How, for instance, was the NBN decision converted, quite seamlessly, from build-operate-transfer initiative to government-project-funded-by-concessional-loan? That conversion requires the imprimatur of the President, nothing less. Perhaps Secretary Romulo Neri can—finally, finally—enlighten us.

"Everything has been covered"? Not by a long shot.

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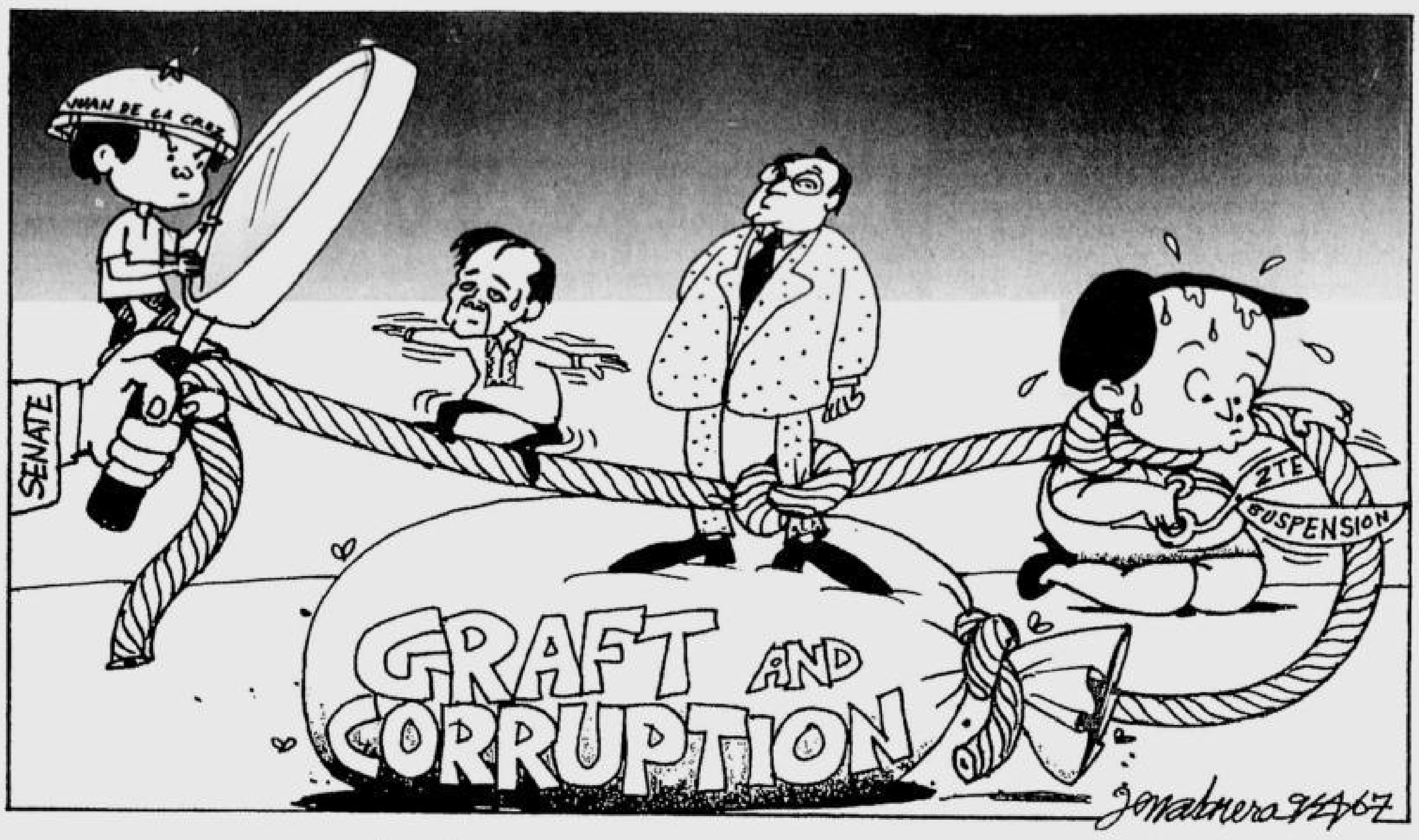

Suspended ZTE deal can be revived later

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE ZTE BROADBAND DEAL SHOULD HAVE been canceled (not just suspended) a long time ago because a very big question mark hangs over it. From the very beginning, it was irregular. There was no transparency, no public bidding and no contract. President Macapagal-Arroyo went out of her way to fly to China just to witness the signing of the contract, the originals of which were allegedly "stolen" soon after. The contract was "reconstituted" later but until now, no outsider has seen it. They seem to be very ashamed of it.

Her Cabinet members can't even agree whether it is an "executive agreement" or a "contract." To top it all, they admitted there was no urgent need to spend a whopping $329 million (that's US dollars) for it. The P26.4 billion (that's billion) Cyber Education Project is another project that is not urgently needed. All that money can be better spent for more urgent needs.

Yet until a day ago, all the President's men were gung-ho for it. GMA herself at first forbade her officials from honoring subpoenas sent to them by the three Senate committees investigating the deal. Then suddenly, when her husband was pointed to by Jose "Joey" de Venecia III as the "mystery man" who tried to bully him into withdrawing his own broadband proposal, GMA made a complete turnaround and told her Cabinet members, including those who were not subpoenaed, to attend the Senate hearings. And when their testimony turned out to be a fiasco, she ordered the suspension of the ZTE and Cyber Education Project.

The term is "suspended indefinitely" but it should have been "canceled with finality." With "suspension," it can be revived when things die down and nobody is looking. Or just before the Arroyo administration bows out. Which prompted some observers to suspect that although no loan has reportedly been released yet, a lot of money has already changed hands. That is why administration men are anxious to push the deal (to get the balance?).

As I said in a previous column, the Arroyo administration is in its "last two minutes" and her officials, knowing that they would be out of power and out of jobs in less than three years, are providing for their future.

That is why it took so long—and only when it was clear that the jig was up—for the President to throw in the towel and suspend the projects. But don't rejoice too soon, deals like these have a way of, like Dracula, coming back to life in the dead of night.

* * *

Here is an update on the controversy over the drastic reduction of the excise tax on Pall Mall cigarettes from P26.06 a pack to only P6.35 a pack. Then-Internal Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag had insisted on enforcing a BIR rule retaining the excise tax on imported Pall Mall for the locally manufactured Pall Mall. Buñag was fired soon after, allegedly "for failing to meet revenue targets."

And Buñag had barely completed packing when Finance Undersecretary Gaudencio Mendoza issued a memorandum revoking Buñag's February 2007 ruling and reducing the excise tax on Pall Mall to only P6.35 a pack. This would make the cash-strapped government lose P93 million a year in taxes from Pall Malls alone.

The only conclusion that can be drawn is that Buñag was axed not because of collection performance (he had collected more than last year) but for his refusal to give in to the "request" of the lawyer-father of a top finance official. This father is reportedly lawyering for La Suerte, local manufacturer of Pall Mall.

In the face of the public uproar, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves attempted to pass the blame on to the very same man he fired: Buñag. Teves told media that Buñag himself had recommended the reversal of his own ruling on the Pall Mall excise tax. The "evidence" is a Buñag memorandum to Teves dated June 13, a few days before he was fired.

I read a copy of that memo and nowhere in it did Buñag recommend a reversal. The memo was merely Buñag's reply to a Feb. 28, 2007 order from Teves for the BIR to submit a status report on the price survey conducted on Pall Mall cigarettes to resolve the issue on its proper classification.

The ruse that Buñag had recommended the reversal was followed by Teves' announcement that he will find out if a review of the recent DOF move by his underling is possible. Either Teves is fooling us or is totally ignorant of revenue laws and procedures. This also hints that Mendoza is being used as a fall guy.

Teves should check on the following:

1. Does a finance undersecretary have the power to reverse a ruling by the internal revenue commissioner? If not, then Buñag's ruling is still in full effect and La Suerte should continue to pay P26.06 a pack in excise tax for Pall Mall.

2. Does a finance undersecretary have the power to rule on the classification of cigarette brands for purposes of taxation? If not, then the Mendoza reversal is void. La Suerte should pay P26.06 tax per pack.

3. Isn't the internal revenue commissioner the only person authorized to do so? And isn't the only leeway for finance officials is to direct the internal revenue chief to make such classification?

4. Why was it Mendoza who had to sign the "reversal" of the Buñag ruling? Why didn't Teves sign it himself?

5. Why did Teves order Buñag to conduct that price survey on Pall Mall just six days after Buñag had issued the P26.06-a-pack ruling on Pall Mall?

More important, why doesn't Teves just admit that the whole reversal of the Buñag ruling is an irregular act that cannot be defended in the court of public opinion? Why will he merely "see if it can be reviewed"? Does Teves see the adverse impact of that reversal on the revenue collection effort?

Whose pressure is it that Teves cannot resist?

Worlds and words

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

(This is an abridged version of the remarks I gave at the launching of "Tongues on Fire" last Friday at the Peta Theater Center.)

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF INTERESTING events today, or thereabouts today.

The first is that it is the 35th anniversary of martial law. The second is that "There's the Rub" will soon be celebrating 20 years of life.

Frankly, I don't know where all the time went, I just went from meeting one deadline after another, and before I knew it, it was 20 years. Every time I see my daughter Miranda and my son Miguel, I find my brain humming, "Is this the little girl I carried? Is this the little boy at play?" My brain swells to a chorus at the next line, which is: "I don't remember getting older." Goddamn, I don't even feel it, except when the gout comes around and gives me exquisitely painful reminders.

Both events, the 35th anniversary of martial law and the 20th year of "There's the Rub," are a good time for me to ruminate on some things. In particular they have compelled me to try to answer a question some friends and strangers have asked me over the last few years. Which is: "Don't you sometimes get tired of writing columns, given that things don't seem to be changing?"

It's an excellent question. In fact, things don't just seem not to be changing, they seem to be changing for the worse. We seem to be stuck in a bog, as I said in a column only recently, and if we're moving at all it is in the direction of sinking in it. Three and a half decades after the declaration of martial law, or 21 years after the Edsa Revolution, we're back to where we started. And unlike what T.S. Eliot said in "Little Gidding," which is that at the end of all our exploring we'll be back to where we started and look at things for the first time, we haven't really explored anything, we're just looking, like fools or people who don't read their history, at the same things for the nth time.

Just as well, since I started writing "There's the Rub," I haven't seen a country move forward, I've seen a country stagger backward. From Cory to Ramos to Erap to Gloria is not an ascent, it is a descent. Or as motions go, it rotates us all the way back to where we started—with Marcos as point of origin.

So, haven't I gotten tired of writing columns in light of this?

Yes. Oh, yes. A thousand times, yes.

In fact I haven't just gotten tired of it, I've despaired of it. Enough to contemplate joining the lemmings that are hurling themselves off into the abyss of overseas work. Some years ago, I even thought of working in a newspaper in Jeddah, imagining the bane of others, which is isolation, to be my boon. I thought I could always use time as vast as the desert, which has buried the soul of many an OFW in the sands of boredom, to write a novel with. Alas, or thankfully, a friend of mine disabused me of the thought, telling me that while working there he found himself at one point talking to his computer as though it were his girlfriend. That instantly cured me of my temporary insanity.

Each time I am tempted to leave the country out of despair to live elsewhere in search of hope, I remember what Winston Churchill said about democracy: It's a horrible system except that all the others are worse. I guess it's the same thing for me about living in and leaving this country: Living in this country is horrible, except that living elsewhere is so much worse.

Quite apart from that, I take comfort in the thought that the better writers of the world have themselves been filled with anguish and despair at the seeming futility of their words. The great W. H. Auden for one in a moment of bitterness arraigned himself: "No poem of mine saved any Jew from the gas-chamber." If someone can say that about a poem, which is not really meant to meddle in the course of secular affairs, then one can say that about columns which exist for that very purpose. It's enough to make me expostulate every now and then: "No column of mine saved any Jonas from oblivion."

In fact in these days of diminished expectations and augmented consternations, it's enough to make me say now and then: I can only hope that a column or two of mine saves me from the monstrous malefactions of the merchants of mayhem.

Thankfully, Auden's remark itself spawned a host of detractors, who rightly pointed out that it wasn't true at all that his poems hadn't saved a single Jew from the gas chamber, they had probably saved many, if only by the doubt or hesitation they filled the heart or mind of those who pulled the levers in other chambers. In any case, the effect of words on life has never been direct, it has always been indirect. Words have a tempering effect on minds and hearts, giving people to see life not as a necessity but as a choice. Of course it is one thing to be presented with a choice and quite another to pick the right one. Or it is one thing to know what to do and quite another to do it.

I do not know if any of my columns has saved a single kid from Palparan's and/or Esperon's clutches or claws, but I take comfort in the thought that maybe they filled the mind or heart of the executioner with a moment of doubt and hesitation enough to not have pulled the trigger or slide the knife across the throat. I do know the sum of my columns has not stopped this country from sliding full circle down the circles of hell, but I take strength in the belief that words do not really affect the laws of the physical universe like magical incantations, they affect the way we act and move like the woeful wails of the cotton pickers chanted in unison or the heaves of slave rowers also cried out in unison.

Like the Greek Oracle, the Word, written or verbal, offers intriguing truths. Like God, the Word, in the beginning or made flesh, works in mysterious ways. *(To be concluded)*

Clemency options

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

THE RECENT DECISION OF THE SANDIGANbayan pronouncing former President Joseph Estrada guilty of plunder has been followed by explorations of the possibility of making him a recipient of executive clemency. We can reflect on this against the background of two reports coming out in media, namely that the Palace is looking for ways of granting clemency and that the former president would be willing to accept clemency provided that it does not entail admission of guilt.

Our question would be whether under current law and jurisprudence, is it legally possible for Estrada to benefit from clemency without admission of guilt? I believe it is not impossible.

Clemency can come in the form of either pardon or amnesty. Constitutionally, there are both textual and jurisprudential considerations which must be taken into account whether one thinks of pardon or of amnesty for Estrada.

Pardon can be conditional or absolute. Conditional pardon means pardon with strings attached. Jurisprudence says that for conditional pardon to be effective it must be accepted. The reason is that the strings attached may be more onerous than the penalty that is being lifted. I do not think this can be availed of without admission of guilt. The very acceptance of the conditions is already at least implicit admission of guilt.

Absolute pardon, however, might be a possibility. It does not need acceptance for it to be complete. If, for instance, it were offered today and Estrada simply foregoes appeal to allow the conviction to become final, it becomes effective after the lapse of the 15-day period for appeal. But not doing anything to prevent finality might still be seen as implicit admission of guilt.

The other form of executive clemency is amnesty but which the President can give only with the concurrence of Congress. Does amnesty offer a more attractive possibility?

We generally understand amnesty as a form of clemency given to a group of political offenders. But is this a hard and fast rule such that it cannot be given to those guilty of offenses which are not political in nature? There is nothing in the Constitution which says that only political offenses can be the subject of amnesty.

Amnesty came to us from American jurisprudence. Under American jurisprudence, the power to grant amnesty is considered merely an aspect of the pardoning power. "Pardon includes amnesty," was the American Court's ruling in United States v. Klein. Later, the Court further added in Knote v. United States that the distinction between pardon and amnesty was "one rather of philological interest than of legal importance."

For us, however, there has arisen a distinction of legal importance. First, the text of the Constitution makes it available only with the concurrence of Congress. Second, the Supreme Court has added the requirement that one who wishes to avail of amnesty must admit guilt.

This second requirement has been a stumbling block for those who want to avail of amnesty. Is this Supreme Court addition insurmountable?

When amnesty was first taken up under the 1935 Constitution, there was no such rule. The Court then recognized that amnesty could be availed of by innocent people who did not want to go through the trouble of having to prove their innocence in a judicial trial.

Until 1949, admission of guilt was not required for availing of the benefits of amnesty. There followed, however, in 1950 an *obiter dictum* in an opinion penned by Justice Tuason where he argued that "amnesty presupposes the commission of a crime and that when an accused says he has not committed a crime he cannot have any use for amnesty." This was reiterated as *obiter dictum* in a case which according to the opinion revealed an "almost unbelievable orgy of bloody executions, reminiscent of the French Revolution."

Finally, however, in 1963 the requirement of admission of guilt became the recognized rule.

I think that this rule should be changed. In effect, the rule requires that if a truly innocent person wishes to avail himself of amnesty in order to free himself from the hassle of having to prove his innocence in a judicial trial, he can succeed only by perjuring himself and claiming that he is guilty. Amnesty thus becomes not an act of grace but an instrument of humiliation.

What then may be done? Who can change the rule?

Amnesty begins as a presidential proclamation under the power of executive clemency. Clemency is a discretionary power of the President. It is almost limitless. It can be limited only by specific provisions in the Constitution.

The requirement of admission of guilt is not a limit commanded by the Constitution. Thus the President can make the terms of the amnesty proclamation as generous as she wishes them to be. The amnesty proclamation can expressly dispense with the requirement of admission of guilt. If the proclamation is, as required by the Constitution, concurred in by Congress, then we will have an amnesty rule that is attractive not only for the former president but also for many others. It will truly be an act of grace.

Did not someone say that the quality of mercy is not strained? The ball is now with the President and Congress!

Daghang salamat, Marcos

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

"THERE IS THROUGHOUT THE LAND A STATE of anarchy and lawlessness, chaos and disorder, turmoil and destruction of a magnitude equivalent to an actual war between the forces of our duly constituted government and the New People's Army and their satellite organizations ... and that public order and safety and security of the nation demand that immediate, swift, decisive and effective action be taken to protect and insure the peace, order and security of the country and its population and to maintain the authority of the government."

And so intoned the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in his Proclamation 1081 which placed the Philippines in a state of martial law (the anniversary of its proclamation was yesterday, Sept. 23, although we know he had actually signed it two days before on Sept. 21).

What was it like to live under the Marcos dictatorship? Marcos ran the country with a carte blanche to do any which way he pleased. His was an act, he had proclaimed, of saving the republic, and because of which Sept. 21 hence and every year thereafter was a joyous moment of celebration as the National Day of Thanksgiving. With the continuing passage of time now that he is gone, it becomes even clearer to me that it was, indeed, a day of thanksgiving.

Let me count the ways:

Thank you, Marcos, for saying that your aim was (1) "to save the republic," and (2) to "reform the social, economic and political institutions in our country." Now we know that every president and politician who says that should be suspected of actually undermining the very institutions of this nation.

Thank you, Marcos, for ensuring the peace and security of the country under martial law. Now we know what human rights violations are.

Thank you for ensuring the peace and security of the country. Now we know what human rights violations are

Thank you, Marcos, for inventing the pretext of declaring war against the New People's Army. Now we know that nothing much has changed since your time, that every president who came after you—including Cory Aquino—has made it a pet policy to declare total war against all forms of dissent. Now we know what state terrorism means.

Thank you, Marcos, for streamlining all media organizations under the authority of your Department of Public Information that whipped up so many praise releases for your government and nothing less. Now we know what freedom of the press means.

Thank you, Marcos, for making certain that capital and investments remain in Filipino hands. Now your widow and children are finally admitting that these investments truly belonged to Filipino hands—your family. Now we know that we were correct in our suspicions all along. And yes, now we know what plunder means.

Thank you, Marcos, for giving us the idea that political families are truly God's gift to this country. With Imelda as minister of human settlements and Metro Manila governor, Imee as Sangguniang Kabataan chair, your brother Pacifico as a government appointee, and your sister Elizabeth Keon as Ilocos Norte governor—traditions that your family has continued to this day with Imee and Bongbong—now we know what political dynasties are, no matter if your erstwhile fighters who used to cry out political dynasty against you have become the political dynasties of contemporary times. But still, thanks to you, we know who they are.

Thank you, Marcos, for re-engineering the role of the military as protectors of the people. Now we understand why many of them continue to confuse their actual role with their politicized personas. Why, we have even elected some of them to the Senate.

Thank you, Marcos, for showing us the way to write the Constitution. Now we know what alert stance to have each time a sitting president starts to tinker with the Constitution for political perpetuity.

Thank you, Marcos, for re-defining the method by which government pacifies its dissenters. Now we have had a new vocabulary in the word "salvaging." And, oh yes, we have become adept too in identifying the telltale marks of summary killings.

Thank you, Marcos, for giving us the idea that when presidents abuse their office, it is the people who will have the last say in the history that they will be re-writing tomorrow. Now, every school child in the country knows that you were indeed a dictator and that your regime was a repressive dictatorship. Let those who come after you beware.

Thank you, Marcos, for providing history with the benchmark with which we now are able to take into account every president who abuses the authority of the highest office of the land.

And lest we forget, thank you for giving us the idea that when the public trust is betrayed, this country is truly worth dying for. Let me say in my native Binisaya: *daghang salamat*, Marcos!

* * *

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

Heroic leadership

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE DILEMMA ROMULO NERI FACES TODAY IS no laughing matter. His inability to appear at the Senate last week only makes public interest in his Wednesday appearance even more intense. In the rumor-infested uncertainty that surrounds the whole investigation, one bit of scuttlebutt glitters like a jewel. In a tension-filled Cabinet meeting, Neri supposedly told the President and his peers that he would not commit perjury. Most people who have heard this story immediately have the same reaction: yes, that sounds like him.

And so, this is why I call it a glittering jewel of a rumor: because most other rumors (some of which, later on, have proven to be true, such as the Wack-Wack meetings) tend to show officials behaving badly. This is one rumor that shows virtue: a clear, concise, demonstration of integrity. A line a man like Neri will not cross, whether out of fear for his mortal soul or a dedication to certain absolutes, whether in the laws of God or man.

By reputation, Neri is a man who has tried to demonstrate that professional success can be achieved without being intellectually or professionally dishonest. We tend to believe that numbers speak for themselves; though the reality is, it is in the interpretation of numbers that mental and professional dishonesty has room for maneuver.

He has managed to move easily in political circles without being accused of prostituting his profession to pursue political or financial considerations. This is difficult to do, not least because in the public sector at least, he has enjoyed the patronage of powerful politicians. In the morally ambivalent world of those holding public office, with great patrons comes the risk of having to utter great lies on their behalf. Yet Neri sticks to the facts.

Matthew Mehan in The National Review pointed out that it was St. Thomas More who coined the word "fact." Neri's career has been dedicated to looking at the facts, and from those facts, figuring out beneficial policies. And it's the example of St. Thomas More, patron saint of politicians and statesmen, that bears a stunning relevance to Neri's dilemma today.

In "Utopia," More said of that mythical place and people that "They have no lawyers among them, for they consider them as a sort of people whose profession it is to disguise matters." Now Neri faces a situation where those "whose profession it is to disguise matters," whether by means of EO 464 or a purely tactical but meaningless suspension of contracts that have sparked controversy, have forced him out of what should have been the pinnacle of his professional career (the director-generalship of Neda) and into where he is, now.

And that is: he is a virtual prisoner, facing tremendous pressure, who had to belabor the obvious to the Cabinet. When he said he would not perjure himself, it suggests that perjury was an option his peers considered wide open to themselves.

St. Thomas More, on the scaffold, said, "I die the King's good servant and God's first." He believed he could serve both God and country faithfully and well; yet knew, too, that if his country (or his king) insisted on seeing otherwise, God's law made the king's law something to endure but not fear. And so, during his trial for treason More used every prudent means to avoid condemning his king for divorcing the queen. And yet he would not budge on his insistence on maintaining fidelity to his Church. He became a martyr not because he freely sought death, but because he would not forsake his faith to please his king. To do wrong to please his monarch was, to his mind, a faithless act, a disservice and disloyalty to God and country.

Neri, under military surveillance, still bound by position to be a servant of the President, called to bear witness before the Senate, must now ponder if he can be the President's good servant and God's, too. There are those impatient with Neri's prudent silence up to now, and who ask, why doesn't he simply speak up, and get it done with? If Neri is, as is said of him, a person who values his honor, still aren't there limits on what Neri should do to uphold his personal honor? More once said that "If honor were profitable, everybody would be honorable;" since so many in the Cabinet are not, why should Neri do any more than the minimum required by his conscience? He will not lie; but he will not proclaim the truth from the mountaintops.

Yet St. Ignatius of Loyola wrote, "Teach us to give and not to count the cost." Does prudence suggest to Neri that there is no sense in his seeking martyrdom over his principles? If so, let him take stock of what he has achieved, so far: the public trusts him. That trust makes me confident he knows he cannot hold back—much less fear that the country won't mind if the administration holds him back. Were Neri to suddenly be "taken ill" before Wednesday, or to suddenly be covered by a presidential prohibition to testify, the country would know the villains: the President, her Cabinet, her goons. It would acknowledge Neri as their victim.

But rather than letting events unfold, perhaps the Neri the country trusts should trust himself to entrust the truth to the country.

In Chris Lowney's management book, "Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World," he describes how St. Ignatius believed anyone could be a leader, and that unlocking that leadership potential was centered on an orientation to show "greater love than fear."

The dilemma is not that Neri is the President's good servant and God's, but rather, he serves God and country. There is a higher law that can arm him with the strength of the ancient Christians as they faced the lions in the arena under the watchful eyes of Caesar's praetorian guard.

Gen. Manuel T. Yan, a lifetime of service

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

JUST A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON THE RECENT SENATE hearing on the National Broadband Network (NBN) project.

Sen. Joker Arroyo made the most intelligent statement on the controversy. He said the whole thing was not about Philippine-Chinese relations or whether we had a contract or an executive agreement. The real issue is about "commissioners." Unfortunately, the Filipino taxpayer will be picking up the tab once the deal pushes through.

A well-prepared Sen. Manuel Roxas II pointed out that while Transportation Assistant Secretary Lorenzo Formoso seemed to be knowledgeable on the project, Lorenzo did not know how many fourth-, fifth- and sixth-class municipalities would really benefit from the network—clearly a case of selective intelligence.

* * *

Last Thursday, the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association tendered a testimonial luncheon to honor one of the finest public servants the academy has ever produced. As a soldier, diplomat and peacemaker, Gen. Manuel T. Yan has served the nation and our people for an unbroken period of 63 years under 11 presidents from Quezon to Estrada.

Born in Sta. Cruz, Manila on Jan. 24, 1920, the young Manuel Yan finished his secondary education at the Arellano High School where he graduated at the top of his class. He then joined the class of 1941 of the Philippine Military Academy and continued to excel in school activities. On graduation day, he received the presidential saber, symbol of superiority in both academic work and military training, from Vice President Sergio Osmeña, the commencement speaker. As the class valedictorian, Manuel Yan became one of the few to accomplish this feat as a mere high school graduate. Many young boys who join the PMA do so after one, two or even three years of college work. The first captain or baron of the class was Col. Abelardo B. Mondonedo. Roberto Lim, son of Gen. Vicente Lim, was a classmate during their plebe year. Bobby Lim left for the US Naval Academy at Annapolis after spending a year at the PMA.

During World War II, 2nd Lt. Manuel T. Yan served with the 1st Regular Division, Philippine Army and joined the Death March after Bataan. He would continue to fight as a member of the resistance movement. After the war, he was sent to the US Army Engineer School at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia and later, to the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Building a reputation in military circles for intelligence, integrity and hard work, he rose steadily through the ranks and was appointed chief of constabulary in January 1967, concurrently serving as the vice chief of staff, AFP with the rank of major general. On May 28, 1968 at the age of 48, he became the youngest chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, with the rank of general.

As AFP chief of staff, he was known to be a considerate boss who was concerned with the personal health of his assistants. An aide during those days was then-Capt. Emiliano "Mitch" Templo, class of 1962. Templo tells of an occasion when, suffering from gastro-intestinal problems, he decided to call in sick. Hours later, General Yan was on the line inquiring about his health and recommending complete rest. Templo was so embarrassed he decided to report for duty the following day even though he still felt weak. How many superiors take the trouble of personally looking into the physical welfare of their immediate subordinates?

In a service that is more commonly known for tough talking men using all kinds of cuss words like "Goddamit" or "bull…t," Yan was the exception. When he was upset by the failures and stupidities of subordinates, the harshest words from him would be "By golly!"

On one occasion while visiting the troops in the South, he was made to wait by the late arrival of a member of his party. Not a word of reprimand was uttered by Yan. Of course, silence can sometimes be more painful for us than a good bawling out.

Yan's tenure as head of the Armed Forces was marked by widespread student activism as well as the emergence of the New People's Army. He was probably the last AFP chief of staff to display four-star license plates on his official vehicle as he moved around the capital region—a tribute to the respect and esteem in which he was held by all sectors of society.

* * *

Upon retirement from the Armed Forces, General Yan was appointed ambassador to Thailand. This was followed by another stint in the foreign service as ambassador to Indonesia. I found myself in the difficult position of following in his footsteps when President Cory Aquino sent me to Jakarta after the Edsa Revolution. Considering that prior to General Yan, my father was also the ambassador to Jakarta, it was like stepping into the shoes of two giants of the immediate past. When I presented my credentials to President Suharto at Merdeka Palace, he inquired about General Yan and when I informed him that Yan was currently the deputy foreign minister (now undersecretary), Suharto commented that "we soldiers continue to serve our country even when out of uniform."

After serving as undersecretary of foreign affairs under Salvador Laurel and later Raul Manglapus, he was designated ambassador to the Court of St. James's in London. He retired from the foreign service in November 1992.

A few months later, President Fidel V. Ramos appointed him presidential adviser on the peace process with Cabinet rank. His work would culminate in the formal signing in September 1996 of a Final Peace Agreement with the MNLF led by Nur Misuari.

Yan's 63 years of service to the Filipino people can be broken down as follows: 35 years in the military; 21 years in the foreign service; and seven years' involvement in the peace process with our Moro brothers. He has turned down all offers to run for public office even when full financial support was assured. Business was alien to him. Perhaps because he has refused the lure of politics and business, he has been able to devote with complete integrity and sincerity all his energies and efforts in the service of his country.

At age 88, General Yan remains clear of mind and body. His legs may be slightly weak but the intellect is as sharp as ever. He continues to serve as an inspiration and shining example to the men in uniform. The Filipino people clearly owe him a debt of gratitude.

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Military harassing journalists

THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS of the Philippines is alarmed over reports that no less than the chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines has prevented a reporter from covering legitimate news events in Mindanao, particularly in the province of Basilan.

The banning of Julie Alipala, a correspondent of the INQUIRER, from covering ongoing military operations in Basilan is a violation of press freedom and the people's right to know as enshrined in the Constitution. She has also repeatedly received threats because of her reports on military operations in Basilan and Sulu—which reports exposed lapses and abuses on the part of the AFP.

The NUJP looks at the military's action against a legitimate media practitioner as pure harassment and an indication of the military's penchant for human rights violations. The NUJP is also deeply concerned for her safety.

What makes this development even more alarming are reports that another journalist has received death threats for exposing corruption in the government.

The Star's Jarius Bondoc sought assistance after receiving death threats allegedly because of his exposé on the controversial $329-million contract for the government's national broadband network project with China's ZTE Corp.

Bondoc has been receiving text messages warning him that he could be shot or his office bombed anytime for his exposés.

The NUJP calls on the authorities to look into these incidents even as it urges the military to stop harassing media practitioners, especially in the provinces.

—JOE TORRES JR.,
chair, ROWENA PARAAN,
secretary general,
National Union of Journalists
of the Philippines,
105-A Scout Castor St., QC

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

PVAO delay hit

MY MOTHER, A WIDOW OF MY father, a World War II veteran, has been waiting for eight long years for the pension-benefits due her, which have by now accumulated to at least P100,000.

Twice we have personally referred the matter to the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) and we sent countless letter-requests, but all these efforts have seemingly been left unattended.

My ailing mother is now 87 years old. She needs the money for medication and subsistence. Is the delay deliberate, so that the PVAO would have a good reason to keep the pension when my mother passes away?

May we know the reason for the delay?

—VIRGINIA P. TAN,
38 Gumamela St.,
Mintal, Davao City 8000

Why pardon or amnesty for Erap?

THE GUILTY VERDICT ON JOSEPH Estrada has been hailed as a victory for our justice system. And, indeed, it is. Now we can expect our laws to apply to the most powerful and influential, not only to the voiceless and marginalized. It gives us hope that other corrupt officials will meet the same fate.

But why is pardon or amnesty now being considered for Erap? Was it enough to expose his misdeeds? Should he not be punished? Letting Erap go without his serving reclusion perpetua will set a dangerous precedent. Other crooks will expect the same leniency from society.

If the biggest fish can be allowed to escape the court's judgment, other dishonest officials will demand the same. And why not? After all, we seem to be taking the betrayal of the Filipino nation lightly. What would the historic judgment on Erap then serve?

Sen. Manuel Roxas II says pardon will bring closure to this sorry period in our history. Closure? What he wants is for us to forget how Erap debased the presidency. He was elected our leader but he instead presided over overnight drinking and gambling sessions and spread political largesse to his cronies. He was supposed to uplift the quality of life of Filipinos but he instead fattened the bank accounts of Jose Velarde. The Sandiganbayan judgment simply affirmed through the legal process what Edsa II accused him of.

"Closure"? Not while there is systemic graft and corruption in government. Closure of this kind will only foster the culture of impunity. And then we will forget and be lulled again into belittling plunderous corruption.

Or is Senator Roxas just courting votes?

—ANGELINA P. GALANG, Ph.D.,
La Vista, Quezon City

GSIS clarifies notice to policeman's widow

ALLOW US TO CLARIFY THE STATUS OF TIRSO D. Diocampo's housing loan with the Government Service Insurance System. ("A cop's widow cries for compassion," INQUIRER, 9/17/07)

Our records show that in 1982 the GSIS granted Diocampo a housing loan in the amount of P42,286 payable in 15 years at a monthly amortization of P386.70. Within two years, however, only four monthly payments totaling P1,546.80 were made.

In 2005, after 21 years, the loan was restructured under the GSIS Rate Reduction and Restructuring Program (RRRP), which offered delinquent borrowers more flexible repayment terms and reduced the monthly amortization. Despite the RRRP, Mrs. Nelita Diocampo paid only a total of P10,000. As of July 31, 2007, the arrears have reached P58,299.77.

The GSIS issued to Mrs. Diocampo a notice of cancellation of the account, not a notice for her to vacate the house, much less for her to fully pay the entire housing loan. She was urged to settle the arrears until Sept. 15, 2007 to avoid loan cancellation.

Last Sept. 14, Mrs. Diocampo made a partial payment for the arrears and promised to pay the remaining balance on the arrears on or before Oct. 2.

—ELLA E. VALENCERINA,
vice president,
Public Affairs Office,
Government Service Insurance System,
Financial Center, Pasay City

PCSO on Atong Ang's STL

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS ITEM "ATONG Ang back in business?" (INQUIRER, 9/18/07) Please allow us to make the following clarification:

1. The board of directors of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the sole authority for approving applications for STL (Small Town Lottery) agency, has not approved the application of Lucky Titanium Corp., contrary to what was "confirmed by an official."

2. The application of Lucky Titanium Corp. was favorably endorsed by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) of Cavite. Initial assessment and review of the documents accompanying the application did not show the name "Atong Ang."

3. The PCSO board has approved the recommendation to stop accepting and processing new applications for STL agency while a comprehensive review of the STL Project is being undertaken with the end-view of introducing all the necessary features that would make its operations as transparent, honest and credible as the online lottery (lotto).

4. The most significant improvement in the STL Project will be the planned adoption and use of the mobile/handheld bet collection and ticketing system to ensure that all bets are captured and accounted for, ensuring that all project stakeholders are given their rightful allocation from the actual sales in the field.

5. The mobile/handheld ticketing system will use wireless gadgets and papers with security features and will be tested in the current experimental areas. New applications for STL agency will be entertained, processed and acted upon only after the system shall have been perfected for universal application.

6. The STL is indeed "aimed at eradicating the illegal numbers game" and at generating funds for charitable undertakings that benefit ever-increasing numbers of PCSO clientele nationwide.

7. As of Aug. 31, 2007, the STL Project has generated more than P504 million for the PCSO Charity Fund, representing the 30 percent of the net sales proceeds since the project's launching in March 2006. The total STL gross sales have reached P1.8 billion. Based on the gross sales, more than P93 million has been remitted to the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The STL's sales performance, charity fund and other contributions speak best for us.

8. It is not fair to blame the STL for the alleged "resurgence of *jueteng* in some areas where it had been purportedly stopped by the police." The STL was implemented—with the support and cooperation of local government officials and the police as requisites—precisely to put a stop to *jueteng*. If indeed there is a resurgence of jueteng in some areas, it should be the local police and LGU authorities who should be made accountable for it, for they are the ones mandated to stop all illegal activities, including illegal gambling, in their respective jurisdiction.

—DR. LARRY R. CEDRO,
spokesperson,
Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office,
E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, QC

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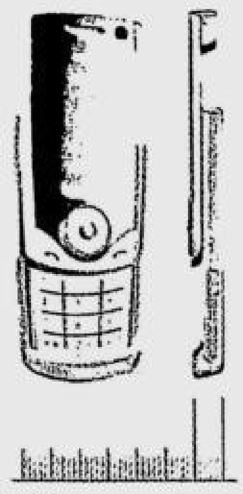

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SAMSUNG

Daring PAF rainmaker wins award

From page A1

on Tuesday. "I always think of the farmers who have children to feed and send to school."

For his daring efforts, Espino on Wednesday received the Lingkod Bayan Award from the Civil Service Commission at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Four other public officials and two government institutions also won the award—handed out to individuals or groups for their "exceptional contributions" resulting from an idea or performance that has national impact on the public interest.

The other awardees were Iloilo City science teacher Josette Biyo, Trade Undersecretary Zenaida Maglaya, Police National Training Institute director Chief Supt. Samson Tucay and Zamboanga del Norte Gov. Rolando Yebes.

The Northern Philippines Root Crops Research and Training Center in La Trinidad, Benguet, and the Philippine General Hospital in Manila also received the award.

Several other public officials, including a slain assistant solicitor general, received the commission's Dangal ng Bayan Awards for extraordinary acts and exemplary ethical behavior, and the Pagasa Awards for outstanding contributions to more than one department.

CSC Chair Karina Constantino-David said the awarding ceremony was a good time "to pause and reflect on the good that is happening in the country" as controversies gripped the administration.

"There may be corrupt people, but there are thousands of public servants out there who are serious and true to their work," she said at the end of the rites, interspersed with stirring performances by choral groups, artists and singers.

Remaining good men

David said the awardees were not the only "remaining good eggs" in the government.

"In fact, most civil servants are keeping to their duties with utmost honesty and integrity despite not being compensated fairly," she said.

The commission cited the 37-year-old Espino for his bravery in conducting artificial cloud-seeding operations at the height of the dry spell brought about by the El Niño weather phenomenon in previous years.

By inducing rain, Espino helped the government save P151.7 million worth of crops, vast tracts of corn plantations in Cagayan Valley, sugar plantations in Western Visayas, and forest land in Bicol from the creeping dry spell, the commission said.

"I feel lucky because I got the award while I'm still alive," Espino, the squadron commander of the rainmaking unit of the 900th Air Force Weather Group, said, underscoring the hazards of his job.

Flying through dark clouds is hellish, but the experience is made more difficult by the thought that the PAF plane is ill-equipped for such missions, he said.

"Inside those clouds, there are heavy rain and turbulence, and total darkness. You feel like you're on a boat that is being shaken violently on all sides," Espino said. "It's a roller-coaster ride."

And then, there's always that nagging fear that even after flying out of the turbulence, he could slam right into a mountain. "It was so dark you wouldn't know if there's a mountain at the end of those clouds," he said.

The single-engine Cessna LC 210 plane (1960 model), the lone PAF rainmaking aircraft, is not designed for such purpose, and lacks navigational instruments, according to Espino.

Awards

Notwithstanding all this, he has promptly responded to any call for cloud-seeding. Since 2003, he has been logging "40 to 100" flying hours a year to induce rain over dry farmlands.

For his feat, the 1994 graduate of the PAF Flying School has won awards. He was named one of The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers by the Metrobank Foundation in 2005.

He has been nominated as well by the Metrobank Foundation, the Armed Forces and columnists Belinda Olivares-Cunanan of the INQUIRER, and Jullie Yap-Daza to this year's Ten Outstanding Young Men awards.

If he isn't flying, Espino is busy showing the ropes to junior airmen by teaching them the basics of cloud-seeding. He's also taking up masteral studies in urban and regional planning at the University of the Philippines.

He plans to send a team to Thailand to check out the technology which allows Thai officers to induce rain from a cloudless sky in a bid to modernize the Air Force rainmaking technology.

"We have to obtain this kind of technology so that if we don't have seedable clouds in the sky, which is not impossible because of our abnormal weather, we still can induce rain," he said.

The Lingkod Bayan awardees each received a medallion, a plaque with citation signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo, and a cash bonus from Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, David and Cesar Buenaflor.

Automatic promotion

They were granted automatic promotion to the next higher rank, or an equivalent salary increase.

Assistant Solicitor General Nestor Ballacillo, who was gunned down with his son Benedict in December last year in Parañaque City, received a posthumous Dangal ng Bayan award. His teary-eyed widow Lourdes received the award on his behalf.

Postman-driver Floro Camote, Jail Senior Insp. Randel Latoza, schools division superintendent Flordeliza Magday, forester Jovencio Muñoz, and state auditing examiner Owen Kim Monter went up the stage to receive the same award.

They were each given a trophy designed by National Artist for Sculpture Napoleon Abueva, cash bonus and other privileges. They were also granted promotion or the equivalent salary increase.

ZTE denies causing trouble around globe

CHINA'S ZTE CORP. LAMENTed that during the Senate hearing last week on the National Broadband Network (NBN) project, the company was "again wrongly accused of causing so-called troubles in other countries around the world like Ethiopia, Mexico, Libya, Indonesia and Thailand."

"Contrary to those allegations, ZTE's business has been doing quite well around the world, including in countries where we had been accused of causing trouble," Howard Xue, ZTE global marketing director, said in a statement.

ZTE, China's largest publicly listed telecommunications manufacturer and service provider, has contracted and completed millions of dollars worth of projects throughout the world, he said.

Xue noted that on Sept. 19, ZTE executed a contract with the Ethiopia Telecommunications Corp. to supply equipment and engineering services. The contract was valued at $478 million.

Senators say NBN …

From page A1

processed the NBN project.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Neri's appearance could provide the "missing pieces" in the ZTE-NBN "puzzle" that other resource persons from the executive department failed to do.

"Among the remaining major players who have yet to testify in a formal hearing, the others being Abalos and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, (Neri) is our best chance to respond truthfully to the many questions we want to ask, particularly on the aspect of bribes and corruption," Lacson said.

Sen. Francis Escudero said that despite the suspension of the NBN project, the culprits in the anomalous transaction still had a lot to answer for.

"Some offenses, assuming allegations are true, are already consummated such as the violation of the antigraft law and procurement law," Escudero said in a text message.

Despite Malacañang's suspension of the NBN project, the House of Representatives is proceeding with its investigation of the ZTE deal. The joint committees on good government and oversight will summon Abalos, said Rep. Rufus Rodriguez.

Oliver Lozano

Perennial impeachment complainant Oliver Lozano has jumped the gun on the minority congressmen, filing an impeachment complaint against Abalos.

Lozano filed the complaint through the office of Speaker Jose de Venecia on Friday, saying Abalos' purported involvement in the NBN project constituted a betrayal of public trust.

Former President Fidel Ramos said the early renegotiation of the NBN deal would be advantageous to all parties involved.

In Cebu City, Cerge Remonde, head of the Presidential Management Staff, said Ms Arroyo's decision to suspend the NBN project would provide the public and the politicians time to understand the importance of the project.

With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas

GMA tactic to avoid fighting on 2 fronts miscarries

From page A1

Ms Arroyo's tactical move to avoid fighting battles on two fronts has miscarried.

The corruption issue gained salience when Jose de Venecia III, son of Speaker Jose de Venecia, testified at a Senate investigation into the NBN contract that Mike Arroyo had brusquely told him in mid-March at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club to "back off" and withdraw his proposal to participate in the project.

The young De Venecia said Arroyo told him "*Iwanan mo na itong proyekto* (Drop out of this project)," while pointing a finger "two inches from (my) nose."

The young De Venecia, nicknamed Joey, and his firm, Amsterdam Holdings Inc., lost to the Chinese ZTE in the fight for the project.

Rocking the establishment

Joey de Venecia said he offered the Department of Transportation and Communications in December last year a build-operate-transfer proposal for the project that would electronically interconnect government offices in an "information highway" nationwide.

He said his firm estimated the cost of the project originally at $130 million, but that the amount ballooned to $329 million when it was awarded to ZTE.

What rocked the political establishment was De Venecia's charge at the Senate hearing on Sept. 18 that Mike Arroyo was the "mystery man" behind the deal and that Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos had lobbied to help ZTE get it, even allegedly offering De Venecia a $10-million bribe, which he claimed he refused.

This testimony and allegations elevated the contract to a major corruption scandal, the first to break after the May 2007 election.

Getting into the act

Joey de Venecia's testimony raised questions, including why Abalos allegedly intervened in a project that had nothing to do with modernizing the electoral process, and how and why Mike Arroyo got into the act, when he performs no official function in his wife's administration.

De Venecia believes that Mike Arroyo was asked by Abalos to intervene after Abalos failed to persuade the Speaker's son to withdraw Amsterdam Holdings' proposal. He claims Mike Arroyo and Abalos were "close friends" and "golf buddies" with Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

Lightning rod

Mike Arroyo has confirmed he met Joey de Venecia at the Wack Wack clubhouse in mid-March—a meeting which his lawyer, Jesus Santos, said was "a purely chance encounter" that did not include bullying De Venecia to back off the project.

It was not clear what provoked the confrontation.

The testimony put Mike Arroyo again in the center of a corruption controversy four years after the Senate investigated charges by Sen. Panfilo Lacson that Arroyo allegedly amassed P200 million from campaign contributions to Ms Arroyo and put the money in a secret bank account in the name of Jose Pidal.

Lacson failed to prove his case. But Mike Arroyo has proved to be a lightning rod for corruption allegations that have swirled around the administration.

Scent of blood

The suspension of the NBN contract with ZTE has not rendered the Senate investigation moot. Nor has it drawn the fire of the corruption scandal away from Malacañang.

The opposition has smelled blood. Joey de Venecia's testimony of alleged bribery by Abalos and his lobbying interventions on behalf of ZTE have served to intensify the opposition zeal to dig deeper into the allegations.

Mike Arroyo is not expected to escape unscathed in the expanded investigation. His supposed involvement in the deal, even if only peripheral at this stage, offers opportunities to embarrass the President.

On Wednesday, former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri is reportedly planning to testify on reports that Abalos allegedly approached him for "help" to push the ZTE contract.

'200 million for you'

According to a report by the newsmagazine Newsbreak, Neri replied he would take a look, and Abalos took this to mean Neri was not interested, so he said, "There's 200 for you here." Neri asked what he meant and Abalos supposedly replied, "200 million," according to Newsbreak.

Neri's testimony is expected to be more explosive than Joey de Venecia's because he is not a party in interest in the process of awarding the contract.

Unlike Joey de Venecia, Neri is not a "sore loser" in a transaction which Sen. Joker Arroyo has called a "quarrel of fixers."

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Banana firms lose in pesticide ban case

FARM workers in Barangay Cawayan, Calinan in Davao City harvest pineapples for export.

BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

DAVAO CITY—A LOCAL court has trashed the petition of banana companies to stop the implementation of the ordinance banning aerial spraying of pesticides in plantations.

In a decision dated Sept. 22, Judge Renato Fuentes of the Regional Trial Court Branch 17 said the ordinance was constitutional and valid.

The ordinance was passed by the city council in March after investigations revealed that the health of residents near banana plantations here have indeed deteriorated due to aerial spraying activities.

The city government gave banana companies until June to comply with the local law.

But instead of complying, the banana companies, through the Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA), sought an injunction against the ordinance.

They said it did not only threaten productivity in about 5,000 hectares of banana companies but was unconstitutional as well.

But the city government retorted citing the case of a similar ban against spraying in Bukidnon plantations.

The city government said plantations in Bukidnon remained profitable without using aerial spraying.

"What is found by the court through their [petitioner] witnesses are not impressive to provide merit of credibility but on the contrary—general observations and obscure presentation of their respective testimony, not convincing to establish the fact on issue," Fuentes wrote in the 37-page decision.

He said the testimonies of witnesses for PBGEA "furnish (sic) 'major inconsistencies as to destroy all probable aspect of what is there to accept in their testimonies."

Among the witnesses presented by PBGEA was Briton chemical expert Richard Billington.

But Fuentes said even Billington failed to convince the court that there was nothing to worry about aerial spraying.

"When confronted with the label of the fungicide Dithane, he admitted that his company, Dow AgroSciences European Development Center, has warned the public users of its dangerous effects to human health with a disclaimer of responsibility of the company in case any untoward incident resulting in the adverse effect of said fungicide (sic)," Fuentes said.

Dow AgroSciences manufactures Dithane to fight *sigatoka*, a leaf spot disease in bananas caused by *Mycosphaerella fijiensis*. *Sigatoka* can seriously reduce crop yield.

"His admission of the dangerous effect of fungicide in itself is enough to put the public to be aware of the said immediate danger poised by the particular fungicide," Fuentes wrote.

He also pointed out Dow's disclaimer saying it was a patent admission of the chemical's adverse effect to the people.

In upholding the constitutionality of the ordinance, Fuentes said the city government "mainly anchored and invoked the inherent power of the government supported and expressly provided in the time honored general welfare clause of the Local Government Code of 1991."

He said the city government only practiced its police power when it approved the ordinance into law.

"The exercise of police power is productive of a constitutional principle of social justice," Fuentes said citing Section 15, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

"After a very extensive review and careful evaluation of the voluminous records submitted, arguments and complicated positions from the parties, the court cannot sustain the theory and position of the petitioners in assailing the validity and constitutionality of the subject City Ordinance," Fuentes said.

The city government said Fuentes' decision was a victory for the people of Davao.

"We are very happy with the decision. We were able to prove our case and that the people's plea did not fall into deaf ears," Enrique Bonocan of the City Legal Office said. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, Mindanao Bureau*

COA orders ex-Pampanga treasurer to pay ₱8M in uncollected quarry taxes in Lapid's time

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Commission on Audit has required a former treasurer of Pampanga to pay the provincial government P8,124,826.51 in quarry taxes which he failed to collect in 1997 and 1998 when Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid was still governor.

Former provincial treasurer Jovito Sabado was held liable for the money that was not collected or did not come to his possession, according to a COA decision issued on June 19.

The uncollected income arose from Sabado's failure to collect the prescribed sand and gravel fee as mandated by the provincial government as well as for the unaccounted official receipts reportedly issued for quarry operation, the decision said.

COA Chair Guillermo Carague and Commissioners Reynaldo Villar and Juanito Espino Jr. signed the decision that junked the April 17, 2001 appeal of Sabado.

COA officials said Sabado "failed to refute the findings of the special audit team which were affirmed in the questioned decision of the [special audit office]."

"In this regard, this commission finds no cogent and compelling reason to reverse the well-founded stand of the then SAO in affirming the findings of the special audit team," the decision said.

Reached through his daughter on Friday, Sabado said the case had been dismissed. Told that the decision pertained to the Oct. 26-Dec.17, 1998 special audit by COA, he said he has not received a copy of the decision.

Sabado has to take his case to the Supreme Court since he has filed two motions for reconsideration before the COA, a state auditor said.

Sabado retired from government service in 2003 and had received retirement benefits, it was learned.

The money that Sabado was ordered to pay came from the non-collection of P40-tax per truckload of sand. This happened as the then provincial quarry task force collected only P12 per truckload and entrusted the money to casual employees and non-provincial employees who were not bonded but were assigned to collect gravel and sand fees.

In the decision, the COA officials said the Local Government Code and an opinion of the Department of Interior and Local Government gave the power to levy and collect taxes exclusively to the province.

The difference between actual collections and should-be collections in 1997 reached P2.240 million in Porac, P937,889.71 in Lubao and P4.371 million in Mabalacat or a total of P7,549,762.51.

In 1998, the difference amounted to P112,000 in Porac, P59,720 in Lubao and P574,000 in Mabalacat or a total of P745,720 in 1998.

The COA said the under-collections totalled P8,124,826.51.

The special audit team found that "collections turned over to the chief [of the] license and fees division were not remitted promptly to the cashier."

The special audit was done on the request of Federico Opinion, then deputy director of the National Bureau of Investigation.

The NBI also conducted simultaneous raids on quarry sites, arresting about 20 people suspected to be involved in illegal collection of quarry fees. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

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ROUNDUP

Skeletal remains dug up in Quezon

LUCENA CITY—Government forces exhumed the skeletal remains of a suspected victim of the New People's Army in Lopez, Quezon on Sept. 9. A police report said joint elements of Task Force Usig, Quezon police crime laboratory and Army soldiers dug up a human skeleton that was buried in the remote village of Villanacaob.

Police investigators believe that the victim was an alleged NPA member liquidated by his comrades in 2005.

A post mortem examination conducted by Lopez health officer Dr. Jose Mercado showed a crack in the left jaw and burned clothes of the victim. The identity of the skeletal remains has yet to be identified.

The Armed Forces said the NPA is still conducting occasional purge campaign to cleanse their ranks.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

2 killed in Laguna smash-up

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Two persons were killed and another was severely hurt when the motorcycle they were riding smashed into an electric post in Los Baños, Laguna on Tuesday night, police said Wednesday.

Laguna police director Senior Supt. Felipe Rojas Jr. identified the fatalities as Mario Lito Mangubat, 25, and Patrick Lopez, 29.

Another victim, Gary Avenido, 27, was in critical condition at the Los Baños Doctors' Hospital.

Rojas said the victims were traversing the national highway in Sitio Libis, Barangay Lalakay on board a Honda Wave motorcycle at about 10:45 p.m. when it suddenly swerved and rammed into an electric post.

Mangubat, who was driving the motorcycle, and Lopez died on the spot from severe head injuries. Concerned residents rushed Avenido to the hospital. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

2 dead in Quezon accident

LUCENA CITY—Two persons died and one was injured after the tricycle they were riding was bumped by a bus in Barangay Doña Aurora in Calauag, Quezon on Sept. 10. A police report identified the victims as Oliva and Edison Villamarzo, both residents of Barangay Sto. Tomas in the nearby town of Tagkawayan.

Investigators disclosed that at around 5 a.m. the tricycle driven by one Ronnie Villamarzo was traveling along the Maharlika Highway towards Gumaca town. When the tricycle was negotiating a curve, the vehicle swerved to the left side of the highway and was bumped by a Bicol-bound Superlines Bus traveling in the opposite direction and being driven by a certain Danilo Malayo.

All tricycle passengers were rushed to the St. Peter General Hospital in Calauag but the victims both died while being treated.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Rebel killed in clash

CAMP MELCHOR DELA CRUZ, Isabela—A suspected New People's Army rebel was killed in a clash with soldiers in Sto. Niño, Cagayan, on Sept. 1, an Army official said.

1Lt. Dennis Guillermo, 5th Infantry Division spokesperson, said soldiers engaged in a firefight with nine suspected NPA rebels in Barangay Lipatan at about 6:30 a.m. Guillermo said the slain rebel, who has yet to be identified, was left by the fleeing rebels after the 10-minute gunfight.

Soldiers recovered two M-16 rifles, a shotgun, a hand grenade and anti-government documents in the clash site.

Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

Hostage taker slain

OLONGAPO CITY—Police shot and killed a man in San Antonio, Zambales, who took a 3-year-old girl hostage in their house on Sept. 3. Police reports said Joji Apostol, who earlier barged into a store in Barangay Rizal at about 2:30 p.m., sought refuge in their house after storeowner Willy Bartolo shot him in the shoulder.

Police said Apostol, who was armed with a knife, saw Beverly Ramos, 3, who was under the care of his mother in their house, and took her hostage. Apostol, according to the reports, then stabbed and wounded Ramos.

When policemen tried to persuade Apostol to surrender, he tried to stab a policeman identified only as SPO1 Sosa, forcing the latter to shoot him. Police took Ramos to a hospital in San Marcelino town for treatment. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Jueteng return in Cavite feared with lottery OK

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA –Police officials here warned that the organized illegal numbers racket might be resurrected in Cavite after a company reportedly owned by controversial casino patron Atong Ang was granted a permit to run the government-sanctioned Small Town Lottery (STL).

In separate interviews on Friday, two police officials also disclosed that they were approached by supposed representatives of Lucky Titanium Corp. (LTC) last month to "get our blessings."

Both police officers asked not to be identified as they were not authorized to speak on the matter.

The first source said he was against STL as it will only pave the way for the return of the illegal numbers game in Cavite.

"*Para lang tayong naglolokohan dito. Itinigil namin ang jueteng sa Cavite, tapos ngayon papalitan ng STL. They will just use STL as front for jueteng*," the police official lamented.

Asked what else the alleged agents from LTC asked from them, they said there was none.

"They said they just wanted to inform us that they will be operating STL and that the police should not arrest their personnel for being jueteng collectors," one of the officials said.

He said during its heyday, jueteng bets amounted to more than P4 million in just a day in Cavite.

The INQUIRER source, who admitted that some police officials used to receive "allowance" from jueteng operators in Cavite before it was purportedly stopped almost two years ago, noted that in places where STL was given a franchise to operate, underground lottery was also revived.

He said this was so because most of the time, owners of STL franchise were formerly connected with jueteng syndicates.

Jueteng draws in guise of STL draws are called bookies, he explained.

The second INQUIRER source said it was difficult for the police to arrest jueteng collectors in places where there are STL franchise as the collectors use the government-approved gambling as scapegoat.

"Some of our colleagues are even charged in courts just because they were doing their jobs to run after illegal gambling operators using STL as cover," he said.

He noted that since STL started in Quezon in 2005, jueteng draws have not stopped in the area as the police had a hard time going after its maintainers.

He said it also pained them to know that some unscrupulous individuals who have been named as behind the illegal numbers game were given the permit to operate STL.

"People in Quezon know that Charing Magbuhos also owns the company which runs the STL there. But you will never find her name in the documents. So how can you expect jueteng to stop?" the official said.

Both police officials also claimed that they were told by LTC representatives that Ang owns the company which bagged the STL franchise in Cavite.

"*Eto na nga yung sinasabi namin. Kung binigay nila kay Atong Ang ang STL, then we will not be surprised kung babalik ang jueteng kasi yun ang nakasanayan niya*," one of the officials said.

"Although I don't have any evidence to prove that Atong Ang owns (LTC), that was what the (supposed) representatives told us," he added.

The provincial council of Cavite has recently approved the application of LTC to put up STL outlets in the entire province.

Vice Gov. Dennis Campaña also admitted that he heard that Ang was involved in LTC.

But in an interview with Inquirer.net, Alfredo Villamor, Ang's lawyer, denied that his client was connected with the lottery company.

Villamor said if Ang had really set up a company, he would have surely informed him as he was his corporate lawyer.

A known gambling buddy of deposed President Joseph Estrada, Ang was among the disgraced president's coaccused in the P4 billion plunder case filed before the Sandiganbayan.

A few months before Estrada was handed the guilty verdict last week, Ang applied for a plea bargaining with the government and admitted to a lesser crime for indirect bribery of a public official.

His petition was granted by the court and sentenced him to at least two years imprisonment while ordering him to pay P25 million in civil liabilities.

After being incarcerated for six months, he was released on parole. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

City mayor, 18 others face graft charges

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—LAPU-LAPU CITY Mayor Arturo Radaza and 18 other officials are facing graft charges for their alleged involvement in the purchase and overprice of 470 computers worth P23 million in 2005.

The Coral Point Educational Foundation Inc. filed the cases of malversation of public funds and violations of the Government Reform Procurement Act and civil service laws before the Office of the Ombudsman-Visayas on Wednesday.

"We will be asking the antigraft office to impose preventive suspension on the respondents while they are being investigated," said Efrain Pelaez Jr., foundation president.

The group found it "appalling that public funds intended for the education of the children would be wasted," Pelaez said. "We are motivated by the desire to obtain justice for all the public school children of Lapu-Lapu City."

The complaint named the other respondents as Vicente Lim, Lapu-Lapu city legal officer and chair of the bids and awards committee; city administrator Teodolo Ybañez; city engineer Fernando Tagaan; members of the bids and awards committee; Serena Uy, school superintendent; and Jennet Valencia, manager of Kein Enterprises.

It accused the city officials and members of the Department of Education of conspiring in purchasing 470 units of personal computers (PCs) worth P49,000 each or a total of P23 million in April 2005.

The computers were bought from Kein Enterprises, which listed its office address as Juana Osmeña Extension in Cebu City, and were of inferior quality, it said.

If the unit cost was not overpriced, Pelaez said the city government could purchase at least 940 PCs. Other companies, such as Gillamac Marketing, sell computers at P25,000 or less per unit, he claimed.

Ybañez, speaking on behalf of the city government, denied the allegations. He maintained that the procurement was above board since it went through the legal process of bidding.

"We welcome the charges because at least we can answer them," Ybañez said.

The complaint noted that the companies which joined the bidding on March 28, 2005, did not indicate the names of their owners.

Pelaez pointed out that Kein Enterprises was not even an eligible bidder because it did not have a prior contract to show that it had sold products equivalent to at least 50 percent of the approved budget for the computer acquisition project.

The company only had a capital of P30,000 based on its application for a business permit in 2005, he said. It had a gross sales of P4.1 million in 2004.

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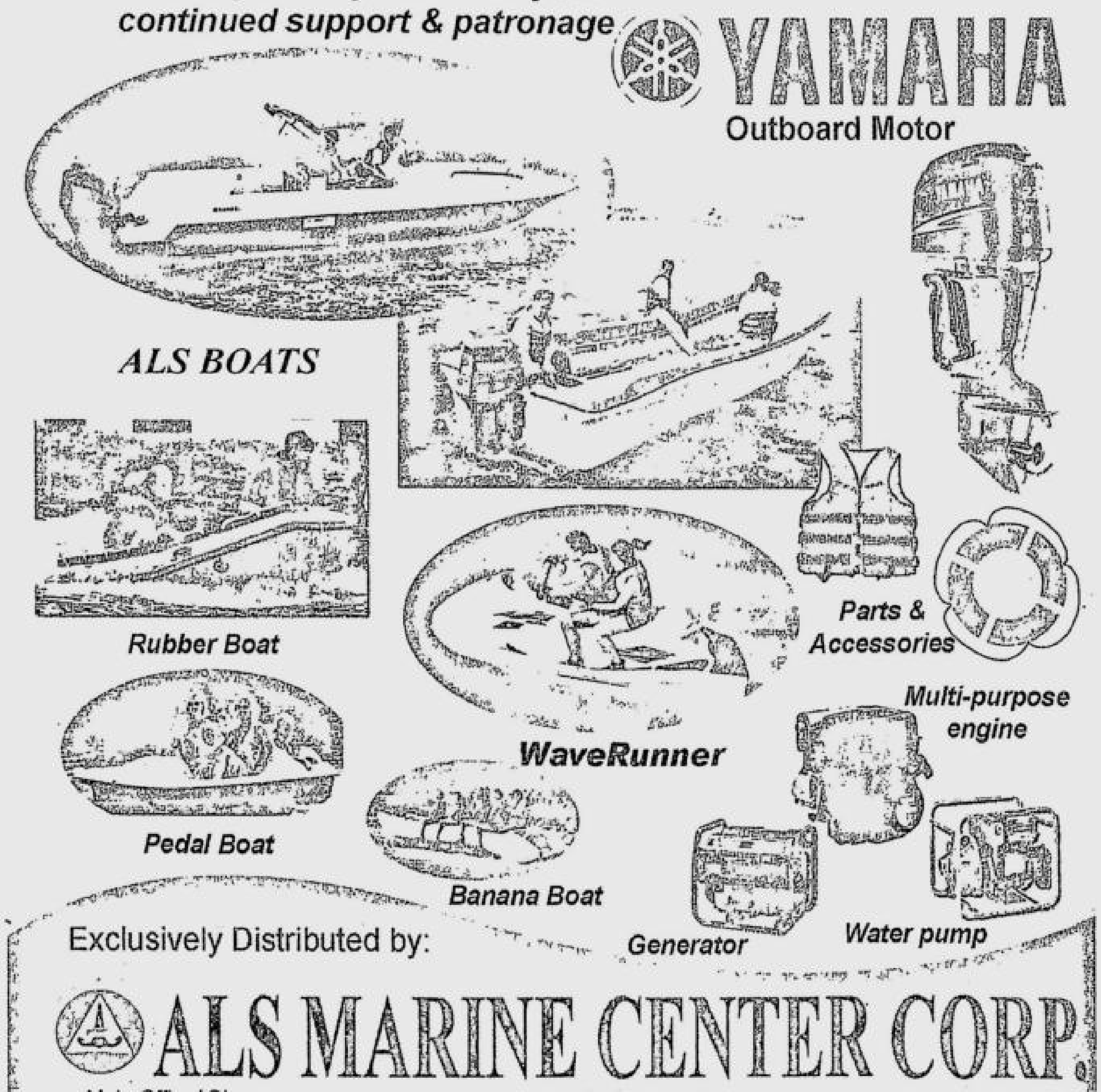

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2 cops hurt in NPA raid in Surigao del Sur

BUTUAN CITY—TWO POLICE officers were wounded during a raid by heavily armed New People's Army (NPA) rebels on their station in Cantilan, Surigao del Sur, yesterday.

Senior Supt. Alex Ga, provincial police chief, said the rebels, numbering about 100, arrived at the police station in Barangay Poblacion on a cargo truck at about 12 noon.

Only four officers were manning the station at the time, he said. "But my men still managed to engage the rebels," he said.

Ga said the rebels ransacked the station's armory after overpowering the lawmen. They took 10 firearms and a radio equipment, he said.

The rebels immediately fled after the incident, which he described as part of the NPA's retaliatory attacks in connection with the arrest of Jose Ma. Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Dutch authorities eventually freed Sison after they found no evidence linking him to the murders of two rival communist leaders.

NPA rebels have been raiding police stations in Caraga and other parts of Mindanao.

On Aug. 22, they stormed the police station of San Isidro, Davao Oriental, and an agricultural plantation there.

The rebels fled with 17 firearms from the police armory and from the surprised security guards of the plantation.

Jorge Madlos, spokesperson of the communist-led National Democratic Front (NDF) in Mindanao, described the attacks as part of the NPA's punitive actions against the government.

The Norwegian-brokered peace talks between the government and the rebels broke down after the NDF failed to convince Manila to press the United States and European countries to remove the NPA from their terror lists. *Franklin Caliguid, Inquirer Mindanao*

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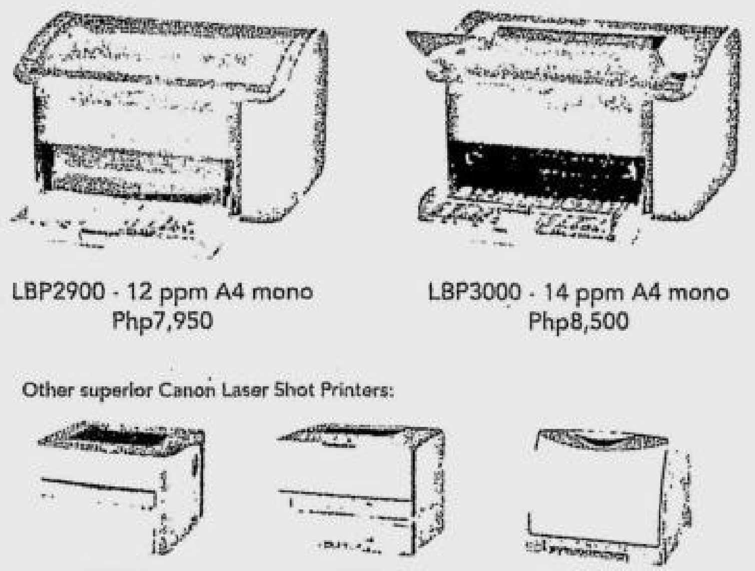

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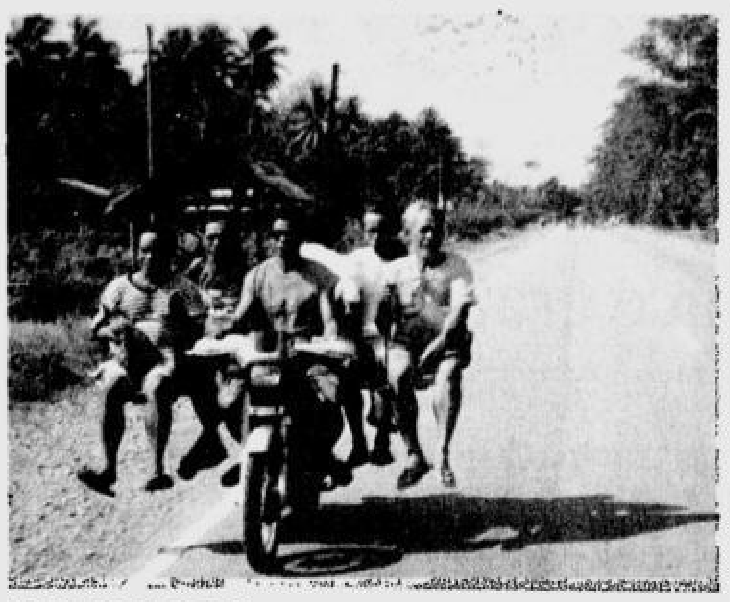

'HABAL-HABAL'
Residents of Trento, Agusan del Sur ride on the "habal-habal" as their means of transportation. JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Red tide present in Leyte town, BFAR warns

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE BUREAU of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Eastern Visayas has warned fishermen of the presence of red tide off Capoocan town in Leyte.

BFAR assistant regional director Justeria Granali said the bureau and the Capoocan municipal government urged fishermen to refrain from gathering shellfish, particularly the golden lip pearl (*Pinctaba maxima*), locally known as "*masabay*."

"But we have yet to declare a ban on the gathering of shellfish in the area. It is up to the task force headed by the Departments of Health and the Department of Agriculture to do that," she said in a phone interview.

However, she cautioned people from eating all kinds of shellfish gathered from the affected area.

The red tide phenomenon refers to the marine algal blooms which, during its growth, tend to discolor the seawater and reflect a predominantly red color.

While most species contributing to algal blooms are harmless, some species are poisonous to animals and humans.

Jovelyn Signar, fishery technologist of the municipal agriculture office, said the presence of red tide in Capoocan was primarily detected in Barangays Balud and Culasian.

The presence of *Pyrodinium bahamense*, a type of algae that causes the red tide phenomenon, was detected on Wednesday when the municipal agriculture office conducted its twice-a-month water sampling in the waters of Capoocan, 60 kilometers from this city.

According to Imelda Sievert, chief of the agricultural center of the Red Tide Center based in Palo town, cell density of the waters in Balud and Culasian reached 35 cells per liter and five cells per liter.

The toxicity level of the shell meat samples reached beyond the normal level of 40-microgram saxitoxin per 100 gram. As of Wednesday, the toxicity level of the shell meat samples reached 60 microgram saxitoxin/100 grams.

"That is why, we advise our people there not to eat the golden lip pearl or "*masabay*" as it is not safe to eat them," Sievert said.

The Capoocan waters connect with the Carigara Bay, which traverses the towns of Carigara, Leyte-Leyte, Barugo, San Miguel and Babatngon.

Granali, however, said the Carigara Bay, as well as the other major bays in the region, still had no red tide.

"But we will be sending out a team to conduct some water samplings in these areas," she said.

Turtle Island about to be destroyed, say execs

ZAMBOANGA CITY—LOCAL officials of the Turtle Island in Tawi-Tawi, a protected area and home to giant leatherback turtles, fear that the island is on the verge of devastation due to foreign and local exploitation.

"I don't know why, but despite being declared protected [and notwithstanding] a memorandum of agreement with the World Wildlife, foreign and even local poachers could still penetrate the island and slaughter our turtles," Tawi-Tawi Gov. Sadikul Sahali told the INQUIRER.

Another agreement has been reached between officials of Tawi-Tawi and the Malaysian government for the protection and preservation of the giant leatherback turtles.

On Sept. 1, Sahali said, Taiwanese poachers slaughtered more than a thousand turtles. "*Mahigit isang libo ang kinatay nila puro pa naman mga inahin at ang iba nangingitlog pa* (Most of them are layers and the others, were laying eggs)," he said.

Aside from the slaughtered turtles, Sahali said more than a thousand young turtles and undetermined boxes of turtle eggs were seized from a Taiwanese boat with body marking "01087."

But Rear Admiral Emilio Marayag, Naval Forces Western Mindanao chief, said its unit in Taganak, Turtle Island, reported that only nine turtles, 200 turtle shells, two live sharks and more than 10,000 turtle eggs were recovered from the Taiwanese poachers.

"They were poaching in the area without any legal papers," Marayag said, adding that residents tipped off authorities about the entry of the foreigners.

Marayag said 19 crew members of the boat had also been arrested and were detained at the Tawi-Tawi provincial police.

But Sahali said there was no such thing as "legal papers" as Turtle Island was a protected sanctuary.

"There is no such thing as legal or illegal papers that could allow them to get inside and kill and harvest our turtles," he said.

Alejandre Ampatuan, director of the Regional Port Management Authority (RPMA) under the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, told the INQUIRER that "only influential people with positions in the government could allow such operation in either non-protected and protected areas."

The problem, Ampatuan said, was that some of the poachers had "influential government officials" as protectors.

He said the ARMM government had already issued an executive order for the operation of the RPMA, "but the order has no teeth yet. We are still drafting the guidelines and manual of operations." *Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

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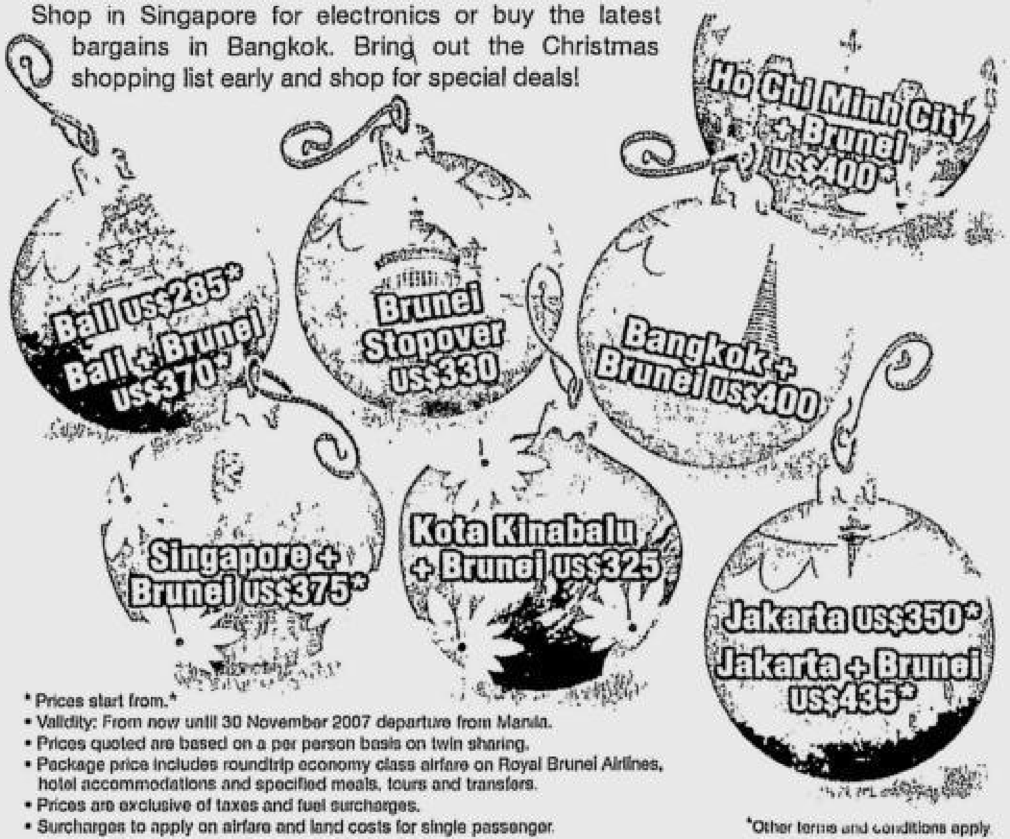

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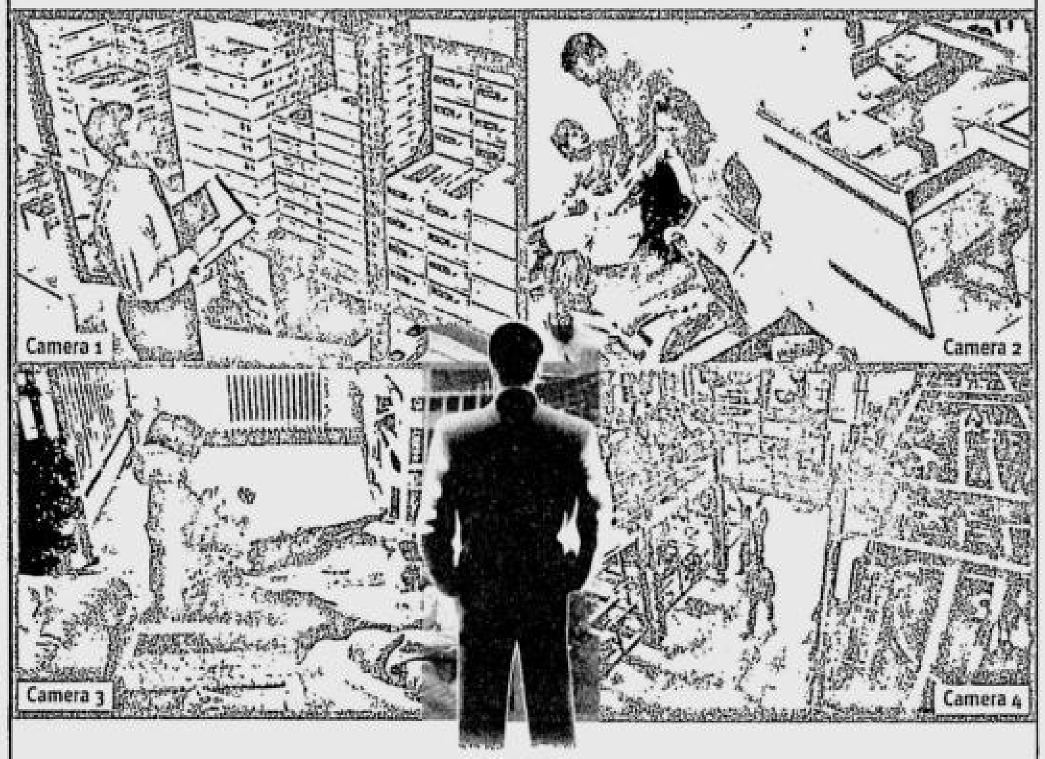

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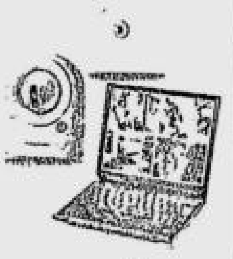

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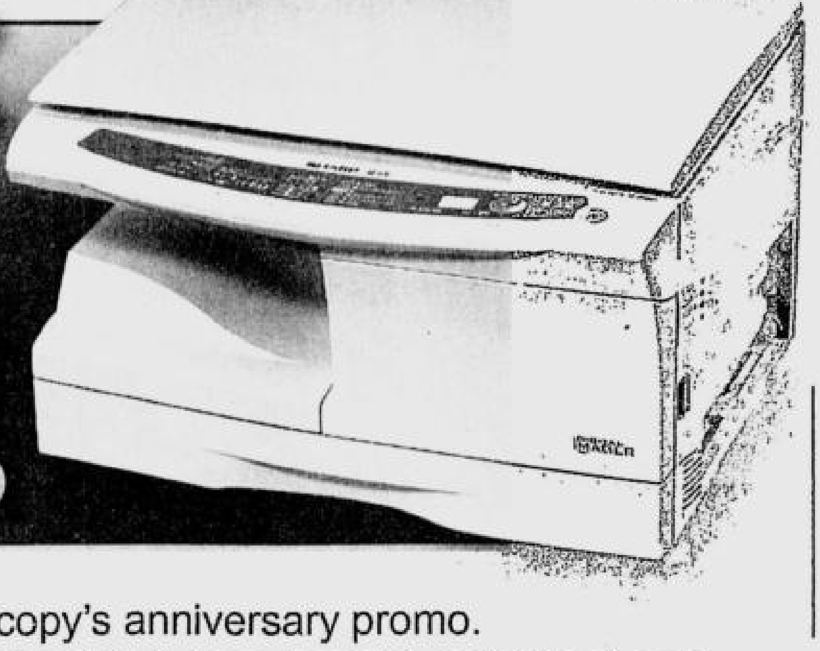

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THE ANTI-DRUG LAW IN THE CORDILLERA

High dismissal rate of cases traced to law weakness

By Donna Demetillo and Elmer Kristian Dauigoy
Inquirer Northern Luzon

(First of two parts)

BAGUIO CITY—IN 2005, SAMSODIN DIanalan, then 21, was arrested for allegedly selling 4.7 grams of shabu (*methamphetamine hydrochloride*) worth P500 to an agent of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in a buy-bust operation.

Dianalan endured two years in jail and was released in May this year after a local court found that he was a victim of "instigation," in which government agents induced him to commit the crime.

Judge Antonio Reyes, in a decision issued on May 2, said that contrary to the claim of the PDEA agents that Dianalan was "looking for a buyer of shabu," the accused had no contraband to sell during the buy-bust operation.

Dianalan, in his testimony before the court, said the agents accosted him as he was buying coffee from a store on Session Road. He said they shoved him into a cab, beat him up, stripped and ridiculed him.

He claimed the agents had planted evidence on him and forced him to admit to being a drug user.

His uncle, Jamil Alonto, said the lawmen also tried to extort P180,000 from them in exchange for Dianalan's freedom. They refused because they believed that his nephew did nothing wrong, he said.

"It was very painful seeing my nephew behind bars. I cried to Allah as I could not bear the pain from this experience," he said in Filipino.

SOLDIERS uproot marijuana plants somewhere in the Cordillera.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SPECIAL REPORT

Dianalan's case is just among cases where poor police work was at play.

Reyes, presiding judge of the Regional Trial Court's Branch 61 or the Special Anti-Drugs Court here, said the law enforcers' "sloppiness" in handling evidence, unpreparedness during trials, and disregard of procedures in handling arrest and operations explain the high rate of acquittal and dismissal of cases in his sala.

Disappointed

"I am very disappointed with the law enforcement agencies. It seems they do not know the procedure in keeping the integrity of evidence," he said.

Reyes said the Supreme Court had pointed out that keeping the integrity of evidence in drug-related cases would be crucial because of the propensity of law enforcers to violate the rights of the accused.

Records from the PDEA in the Cordillera showed that 403 drug-related cases were filed in the city from 2002 to June 2007, most of these related to the trade and use of shabu.

Of these, 124 resulted in acquittal (30 percent), 103 in dismissal (25 percent), and 91 in conviction (22 percent). At least 85 cases (21 percent) remain pending.

Records from RTC branch 61, on the other hand, showed that it handled 398 drug-related cases from 2003 until July this year. Of these, 91 (22 percent) resulted in conviction, 116 (29 percent) in acquittal, and 92 (23 percent) in dismissal. It has 68 pending cases (17 percent).

During the five years that Republic Act No. 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 has been implemented, the rate of cases that resulted in acquittal and dismissal was higher than the rate of conviction. In the PDEA records, dismissals and acquittals accounted for 56 percent while records from Reyes' court showed the dismissals and acquittals totaled 52 percent.

Drug-related offenses committed before the implementation of R.A. 9165 were tried under the old anti-illegal drugs law, the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1972 (R.A. 6425).

Records from Reyes' court showed that of the 252 cases filed from 2000 to 2002 that were tried under RA 6425, 162 (64 percent) resulted in conviction, 50 (19 percent) in acquittal, and 24 (9 percent) in dismissal.

Chain of custody

Reyes said PDEA agents, in cases lodged in his sala, had failed to establish the chain of custody of confiscated drugs.

Often, he said, pieces of evidence were passed on from one agent to the next without these being marked, inventoried and photographed in the presence of the accused.

"When that happens, the integrity of the evidence is compromised," Reyes said. "How will we know that these were the same drugs that were found on the accused?" he asked.

He also cited the inconsistent testimonies of the arresting officers before the court as among the reasons for the high rate of acquittal and dismissal.

"*Binababoy nila talaga* (They are disrespecting the process)," he said.

As a judge, Reyes said, he had no choice but to render an acquittal. "This is a nationwide phenomenon in my level (RTC)," he said.

Baguio Prosecutor Conrado Catral Jr. said law enforcers (policemen or PDEA agents) are vital in the successful prosecution of a drug-related case.

"My task is only to present evidence that has been introduced by the police. They are the main witnesses. Their statements are the foundation of the prosecution," Catral told the INQUIRER.

Officers usually come to court unprepared, he said. They read case records only when they are on their way to the trial. Some meet him at the courtroom's door only minutes before the trial starts.

"They don't come to my office. They go to court immediately. I always tell them to go to my office as [often] as they can, [at least] one or two days before the trial, [but they would not heed my plea]," Catral said.

When the court is in session, unpreparedness takes its toll on the agents.

"When they are cross-examined, the inconsistencies become apparent. Their testimonies conflict with each other, especially on crucial details," Catral said.

A reason behind inconsistent testimonies may be the lack of coordination and communication between officers, he said.

Conflicting schedules

Catral said officers involved in the same operation might not have the chance to talk through the details before their court appearance due to their conflicting schedules. The result? One's testimony may deviate from the other, he said.

Time may also play a role.

"[For instance], the operation was in January, the [suspect] will be arraigned in February and the hearing may be set April. Within that span of four months, the officers may already forget the details of an operation. In four months, they may also have conducted several operations. They can really get confused [about the details], especially when they testify for two or three cases on the same day," Catral said.

When testimonies of vital witnesses collide, the case usually results in acquittal or dismissal, he said.

"Several Supreme Court decisions have pointed out that if there are inconsistencies or discrepancies in the testimony of the witness, these do not necessarily affect the credibility of the witness if [these] only relate to minor matters," Catral said.

"But if the inconsistencies in the testimony of police officers relate to substantial matters, these cast doubt upon the mind of the court. In criminal cases, [the prosecution has] to prove [guilt] beyond reasonable doubt."

Apart from these reasons, he said a number of the accused presented in court were indeed innocent and did not violate the law.

"We would have to admit that sometimes, they catch the wrong person," he said.

Not solely to blame

But Supt. Oliver Enmodias, PDEA Cordillera director, said the low rate of conviction should not always be blamed on PDEA agents.

While he admits the PDEA's shortcomings in the successful prosecution of cases, Enmodias said the court should be more objective in deciding cases.

"It is becoming apparent that he (Reyes) does not trust the PDEA. Sometimes, we get discouraged to operate because [the case] will most likely be dismissed," he said. "It would be better if cases could be raffled off to different courts."

Enmodias said his office has started reviewing all cases handled and decided by Reyes to determine what went wrong.

"I admit that we have our shortcomings, but it is not right to blame it all on the PDEA," he said. "No one is perfect. Not even the courts or the law itself. We are not Superman but we are trying our best." *(Tomorrow: Is the anti-drugs law weak?)*

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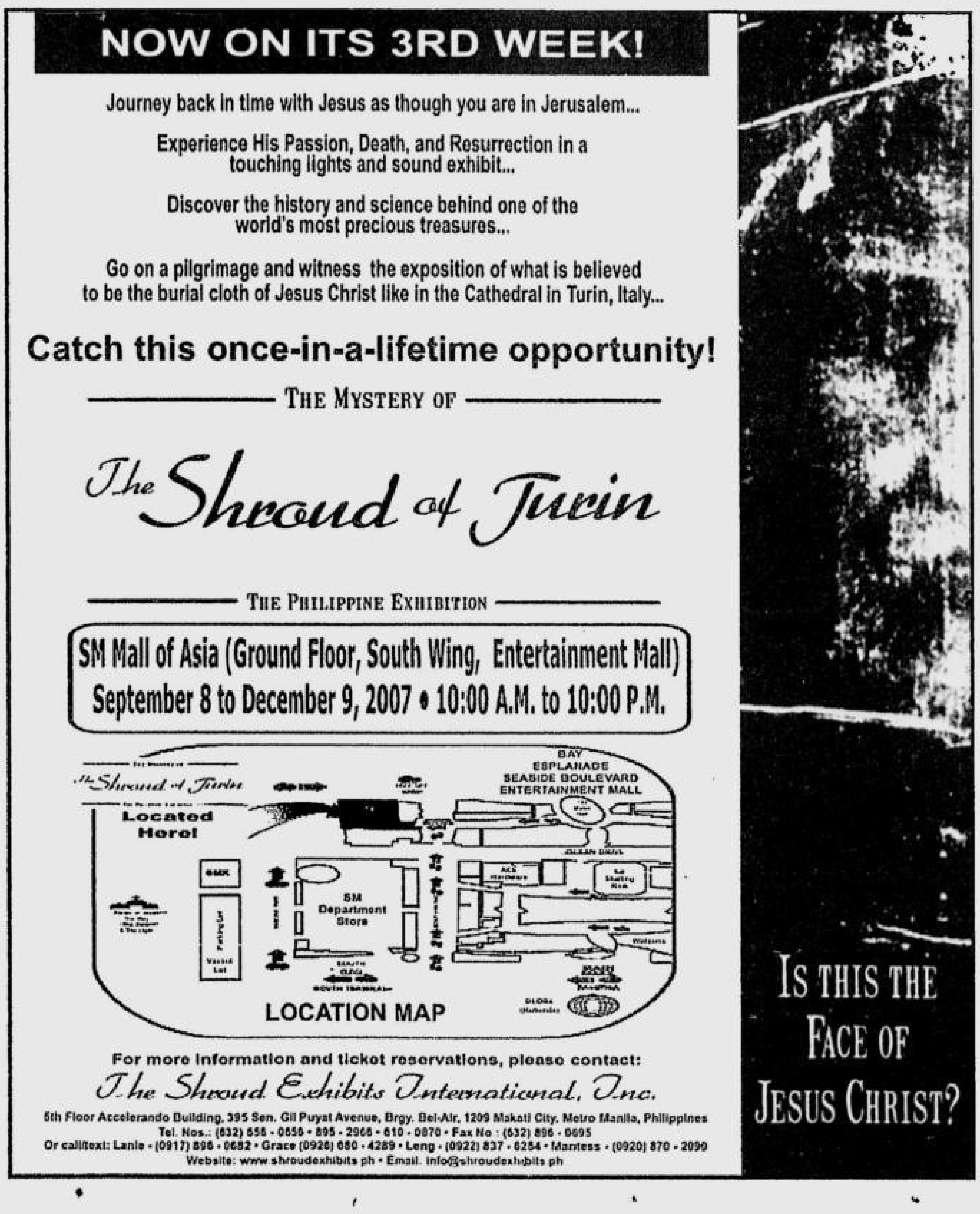

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Love for kids spells success for model teacher

By Niña Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

MADELINE Rivera or Teacher Madie to her pupils.
NIÑA CATHERINE CALLEJA

SAN PABLO CITY—SHE HAS no children of her own but elementary teacher Madeline Rivera, 45, or Teacher Madie in her school, treats her pupils as her own. For over 19 years of teaching in San Pablo Elementary School, Rivera extends her home to her class.

Her hard work and passion for teaching was recently rewarded when she became one of the 10 recipients of the 2007 Metro Bank Outstanding Teacher Award last August.

With nine other teachers, Rivera bested 200 teachers from the nationwide search.

Even the principal of San Pablo Elementary School can attest to Rivera's dedication to work.

Anita Quiatchon, principal of San Pablo Elementary School sees Rivera's commitment to her pupils, co-teacher and to the entire school.

"Ask any pupil here, and he would say how dedicated she is. She is very much loved by her class," she said.

Quiatchon said Rivera enters the school before 7 a.m. and leaves at around 6:30 p.m.

She has been teaching Hekasi (geography, history, and civics) to over 160 elementary students in a year.

Just doing the job

When her co-teacher informed her that she won and her name was in the newspaper, Rivera just could not believe it would happen.

"I was shocked and felt it was another joke [because] after the final judging I had already sensed that I lost," she said.

Rivera called the program coordinator of Metro Bank for confirmation.

"When I verified that I won, I immediately called my husband and jumped with joy," she said.

Winning this award, however, is not Rivera's ultimate dream. She has been hoping for the students she is training to win the national quiz bee contest.

Since 1990, Rivera has been training grade six pupils for quiz bee competition in Hekasi category.

Normally, Rivera recounted, they would win in the division level but lose in the regional contest.

Just last year, however, a student she was training championed the national competition.

But, she finds the Outstanding Teacher Award a "blessing."

Rivera said she kept on telling her co-teachers that she was rewarded by just doing her job.

"I was awarded for doing what I enjoy," she said.

She enjoys teaching kids since she has no children and her husband works in Dubai.

Rivera noted that she didn't want to have a barrier in teaching so she doesn't just treat the kids as her students. After classes and during breaks, she chats with them as, according to her, teachers could also learn from kids.

She was accustomed to her daily routine of "school and home."

"Usually, I just take coffee in the morning and then proceed to the class," she said.

Upon graduation from Laguna College with a degree of Bachelor of Science in Education for High School, Rivera immediately applied and got accepted in a public school in a barangay.

Since the central elementary school of San Pablo is near their residence, she decided to transfer to that school.

Rivera did not come from a well-off family so she had a frugal lifestyle in college.

"Unlike other students, I had no allowance and I just walked from our house on the way to school," she said.

She also took an education course because teaching job was in demand. But, she eventually fell in love with the job.

"Because I have no children, I have around 42 sons and daughters every year. I am always happy to see beautiful, handsome, and brilliant kids every day," she said, referring to her advisee-section.

"Whatever successes in life they have achieved, we [teachers] were part of those. They (former students) have been coming back to say 'Ma'am thank you'," she added.

Study, play

Rivera believes that Geography, History, and Civics would not be boring to kids if taught differently.

She always tries new approaches in teaching to make the class discussion "student-centered."

"I don't like them to memorize people, dates, and facts but just understand the lesson. Once they are able to understand and appreciate the lesson, they will easily remember it," Rivera said. She kept telling this to her pupils.

She said it could be a panel or roundtable discussion and sometimes the pupils would present a role-play. "The discussion should not be monotonous (so) I explore other approaches," Rivera added.

One time, she was really surprised when pupils, clad in costumes, facilitated a discussion on indigenous peoples.

Once a year, she brings her Grade 6 class to a barangay for community work. The pupils are oriented with the role of the barangay chair and other officers.

They are also launching a one-day cleanup near the Sampaloc Lake for the kids' "community work exposure," said Rivera.

Though Rivera was very outgoing in her class, she knows how to discipline rowdy students.

"Just give them something to do and they'll sit and become quiet," she said.

Rivera has a long stick she calls a "magic wand" that she shows off to her pupils to scare them. But, she never hurts them even if pushed to her limit, she said.

Pupils, she explained, must know that they are wrong because they will not be corrected until they become adults.

"I kept on telling the kids that I don't need a bright child but an upright person when he/she grows up," she said.

Rivera is not sad whenever the kids she handles graduate and leave.

"That's part of it. They come and go. And, I am always looking forward to another batch of beautiful, handsome, and bright kids," she said.

She said she would continue teaching despite the meager pay.

"I just live a simple life and not go beyond my needs. But we, teachers, still dream of a salary increase," she said.

Lapid's comeback in Pampanga seen via SCTEx interchange

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

LAPID

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Watch out for "Ang Pagbabalik ni Leon Guerrero (The Return of Leon Guerrero)."

That's no remake of actor-turned-senator Manuel "Lito" Lapid's action movie in the 1980s, but the title pundits gave a new chapter to his possible political comeback as governor of Pampanga or mayor of Angeles City.

Instead of riding on his white horse, Lapid's vehicle for his return is an interchange for the national flagship project Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway.

The senator wants one built right in Barangay Planas in his hometown of Porac. The Bases Conversion Development Authority, the SCTEx's proponent, had scrapped the interchange project from the original plan due to its nearness to the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport and lack of funds.

A private group, Advocacy for the Development of Central Luzon, lobbied for one in Manuali, also in Porac, reviving clamors by other politicians, including Lapid.

Secretary Edgardo Pamintuan, chair of the Subic-Clark Alliance for Development Council (SCADC), said Lapid promised to set aside P85 million from his countrywide development fund to get that interchange done.

Lapid has also gone out of his way to convince the Puyat family to donate some portions of land for the interchange's right-of-way, Pamintuan said.

The senator has also backed up the proposal of Pamintuan and Pampanga Rep. Carmelo Lazatin to build another interchange on Friendship/Margot in Angeles, he said.

As chair of the Luzon Urban Beltway super region, Pamintuan has endorsed both interchanges through a memorandum submitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo after a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

"Lito did not want his town to be left out," Pamintuan said of the senator's wish. "He also thinks that the interchange is the best access for the rest of Pampanga."

In political circles, however, talks thrived that Lapid was bound to return to local politics via that interchange.

"The man wants to endear himself again to his *kabalen* (province mates)," said a businessman, an erstwhile friend to Lapid, 57. He's set to complete his six-year stint in the Senate in 2010. His chances of reelection is said to be not too rosy, given his reported dismal performance in legislation work.

The hold of Lapid on local politics ceased when his eldest son, Mark, lost in his reelection bid. The defeat came even as the senator campaigned for his 27-year-old son.

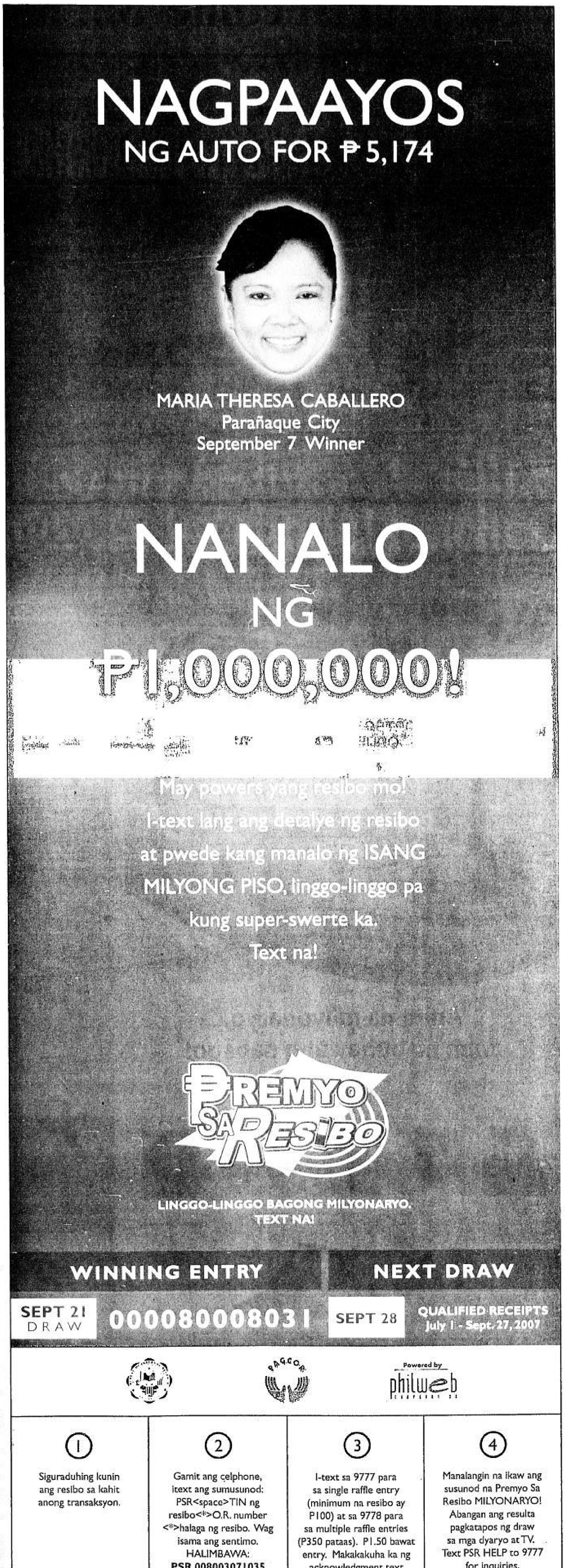
Mark's loss ended the Lapids' 12-year reign in Pampanga. The elder Lapid ventured into politics as vice governor in 1992. By then, he had shored up his waning popularity in the movies by portraying himself as a hero to victims of Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions.

Lapid on Wednesday did not answer the INQUIRER's calls to his mobile phone. His aide said the senator would call back, but Lapid never did.

If he should run, some local government officials and business leaders said Lapid would be in for a tough fight, more difficult than what he and his son hurdled out in the May 14 elections.

"It's going to be a crawl for Lito. He'll have to explain why quarry revenues were so low in his time and so high in Gov. Eddie Panlilio's time," said a mayor in the third district of Pampanga.

Quarry collections totaled P57 million in the 56 days that Panlilio was in office. The younger Lapid's score is a low of P29.1 million for the whole of 2006.



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Next tourist come-on: RP's diverse volcanoes

DENR mulls using fiery mounts' flora, fauna to lure adventurers

By TJ Burgonio

ENVIRONMENT OFFICIALS PLAN TO TURN VOLCANOES WHICH are rich in biodiversity, such as Mt. Iraya in Batanes, into "eco-tourism zones" that could benefit the local communities.

Officials of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said that aside from their natural features, volcanoes offer other attractions such as endemic flora and fauna to climbers, adventurers and tourists.

"A volcano doesn't erupt every day. Therefore, we can promote these as tourist attractions. And biodiversity is part of the attraction," PAWB director Theresa Mundita Lim said at a forum on volcano eco-tourism.

There are 16 volcanoes across the country—active ones, potentially active and inactive—that have been designated as protected areas by the DENR.

Of the protected areas, Iraya, Mayon in Albay, Taal in Batangas, Kanlaon on Negros Island, Matutum in South Cotabato, Bulusan in Sorsogon, Banahaw in Quezon and Hibok-Hibok on Camiguin island are active volcanoes.

Apo in Davao, Isarog in Camarines Sur and Kalatungan in Bukidnon are potentially active, while Kitanglad in Bukidnon, Malindang in Misamis Occidental, Inayawan in Lanao del Norte and two others are inactive.

Endemic flora and fauna thrive in most of these volcanoes like the freshwater snake at Taal, the Waling-Waling orchid on Apo, the hornbill and bleeding heart pigeon on Kanlaon and the cloud rat on Bulusan.

At the forum, Lim admitted there was no government eco-tourism program yet for these volcanoes, but said any "development" would depend on each volcano and its unique topography.

She said that some parts of these protected areas, except for the "strict protection zone," could be developed into eco-tourism zones, and but this would have to be cleared with the management board of each protected area.

"In Taal for example, we were asked about the spa. If it's near the crater, it lies within a strict protection zone," she said, referring to the controversial Korean spa project near Taal's crater that was scuttled following protests by residents.

In her presentation, Perla de los Reyes of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said any developer should consider volcanic hazards before developing any part of a volcano into a tourist spot.

"Make sure that there are no settlements in the permanent danger zone, or in areas identified as prone to volcanic eruptions and its hazards," she said.

Francois Dominique de Larouziere, scientific director of Vulcania Park, said he was willing to share the concept behind the museum-cum-leisure park in France with Philippine officials.

De Larouziere, however, said he would not advise Philippine officials to build a replica of the European Park of Volcanism, which cost a whopping 118 million euros, or over P7 billion.

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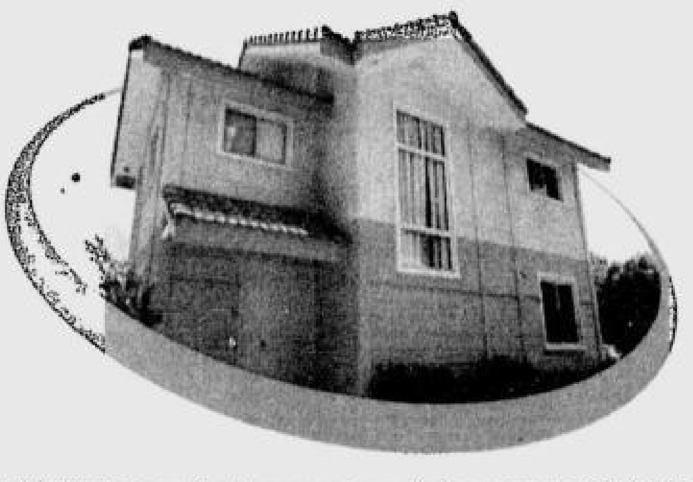

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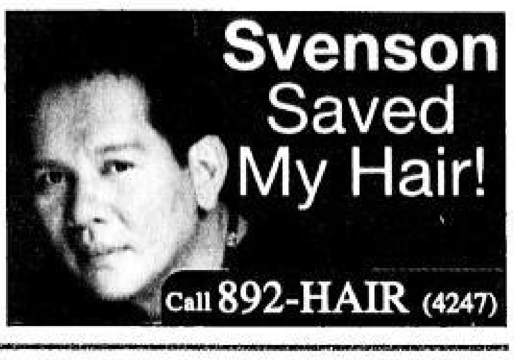
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Busy Sunday morning for QC cops

Bodies of 3 suspected salvage victims found

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

QUEZON CITY POLICEMEN had their hands full yesterday morning after three suspected victims of summary execution were found separately.

At 5 a.m., a tricycle driver called up the city police's station 7 after he found the body of a still unidentified man beside the garage of the Dagupan Bus Lines on P. Tuazon corner C. Benitez streets.

The victim, about 25 to 28 years old, 5'1" tall, of slim build and fair complexion, was wearing a green undershirt and a pair of denim pants, police records showed.

Jerick Cordano, the man who found the body, said he was driving his tricycle when he noticed a black garbage bag on the street. Curious about the bag's contents, he opened it and saw a man's body inside.

Around 45 minutes later, the same police station received another report about a body in a garbage bag. This time, it was found by a group of men who were walking on 11th Avenue in Barangay Socorro.

Police records showed that the second victim was about the same age as the first. He was 5'3" in height, of medium build with fair complexion, and clad in a yellow T-shirt and a pair of denim shorts.

According to the police, the two victims bore "Bahala na Gang" tattoos. The first also had the word "Abel" on his back while the other had a tattoo on his chest which read "Boy Cadalo."

Both men's were covered with a plastic bag and their hands were tied with packing tape, the police added.

Scene of the Crime Operatives said the victims bore stab wounds on the chest and ligature marks around the neck.

The body of the third victim, on the other hand, was found at 5:30 a.m. inside a rusty metal drum in Barangay New Manila.

The victim was described as between 28 and 30 years old, 5'5" in height, of medium build and with fair complexion. He was wearing an orange T-shirt and a pair of denim pants, police said.

Unlike the two others, however, the third victim bore a single gunshot wound in the back of his head. Police said they were trying to determine whether the three deaths were related.

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UP hazing victim's death moves former frat officer

By TJ Burgonio

A FORMER FRATERNITY OFFICER OF THE University of the Philippines Visayas has attempted to recreate the tragedy of promising students who met violent deaths at the hands of their "brothers" in the medium he knows best: Canvas.

Not only that, Hong Kong-based muralist Joel Ferraris has decided to donate the painting to the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) in the hope of putting a stop to the culture of violence on campus.

"I've been out of UP for some time, but I still get affected by news of fraternity violence. They don't give me peace of mind," Ferraris, 48, said in a phone interview last Thursday.

The NCPAG and UP have been trying to deal with the death on Aug. 27 of senior public administration student Cris Anthony Mendez in what authorities said was another case of fraternity violence.

An autopsy report said that Mendez, who was the NCPAG representative to the UP Student Council in Diliman, Quezon City, had been beaten up badly. A witness recently surfaced and claimed that Mendez had joined the Sigma Rho, one of the fraternities in UP, and was set to attend the initiation rites days before his death.

The painting, hand-carried from Hong Kong to Manila by activist priest, Fr. Robert Reyes, will be turned over to NCPAG dean Alex Brillantes today after a Mass at noon. It will be hung at the college's atrium.

Titled "The Wrong Sacrifice," it depicts a suffering young man who appears to be carrying a piece of wood shaped like a paddle on his shoulder. Set against a backdrop of blue and red, the subject's head is crowned with laurels but is struck with a jagged sword.

Reyes said he and Ferraris conceptualized the painting during a brainstorming session at the Excelsior Hotel in Hong Kong on Sept. 2, close on the heels of Mendez's death.

"We are Christians, and it's our responsibility to study faith and practice it. If we are Christians, we should not allow the culture of violence to thrive," said Ferraris, who, together with his wife, is a member of the Couples for Christ.

"There's only one brotherhood, and that is the brotherhood under God the Father. The rest is divisive," he added.

Ferraris studied architecture at UP Visayas and joined the Scintilla Juris fraternity as a freshman in 1976, eventually becoming one of its officers.

"I've experienced it all," he said, referring to fraternity violence. He quit his studies in his final and fifth year because he could not cope with the academic requirements and the demands made by the fraternity on his time.

Through his painting, Ferraris wants to show that the supposed rewards one gets from joining a fraternity, such as security, were mere illusions, Reyes said.

"From experience, the senior frat members who are professionals will promise heaven and the universe to their members, telling them that 'if you join us, we will promise you a bright future.' It never happens. The bright future goes to the more talented, perhaps the more popular members of the frat," Reyes added. "It's a mere illusion. You attain your dreams through your merits."

Ferraris said that he wants to get across the message that undergoing physical pain just to join a fraternity was a "wrong sacrifice."

Apart from the painting, Reyes also brought with him the P45,400 raised by Hong Kong-based UP graduates led by Butch Durias for Mendez's family.

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'Tsikitings' to create mini forests in urban jungle

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD RAMON Madrid has never set foot in a real forest.

Nor has he felt cool winds in a mountain setting or seen streams gurgling with pristine waters. The sound of birds chirping and the sight of butterflies fluttering are scenes he hears—and sees—only on television, the movies or in books.

Ramon lives in a condominium located in another jungle, one made of concrete and steel.

That is why "Tsikiting Gubat (Children of the Forest)," an environmental project which aims to teach children the importance of having nature in their immediate surroundings, was recently launched.

"It is never too young to start teaching children how to plant trees and care for the environment," environmentalist Odette Alcantara, founder of the Mother Earth Foundation, told the INQUIRER during the project launching at her house in Quezon City.

A dozen children showed up for the event where each of them was given a 5-month-old seedling of a fire tree. Children as young as 3 years old were accompanied by parents who were more than happy to see their offsprings become environmentalists at such a young age.

RAMON Madrid, (center, with glasses), the 8-year-old leader of the "Tsikiting Gubat," and other members of the group display their fire tree seedlings during the recent launching of the project. The children have promised to create pocket forests in the city. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

The aim of the activity, said Odette—"Lola O" to her colleagues— is to create "mini forests" in the city by planting as many trees as possible in available spaces. For starters, the kids were told to plant the seedlings in their own backyard.

"Tsikiting Gubat" is an offshoot of the the Centennial Ramon Magsaysay Tree Planting Project, a bigger undertaking initiated by persons named after the late president, whose objective is to plant 100,000 trees from Aug. 31 this year to March 17, 2008.

The project is in commemoration of Magsaysay's 100th birth anniversary.

Magsaysay, who was born on Aug. 31, 1907, in Zambales, died on March 17, 1957, when his presidential plane, "Mt. Pinatubo," crashed into Mt. Manunggal in Cebu.

"Children today never get to feel the cool breeze brought about by the leaves of the trees. Now, all they get is artificial wind from air conditioning units. It is unfair to them," Lola O said. She added that children are better off playing in parks where trees abound, instead of malls where all they see are concrete and cemented walls.

Ramon, a Grade 2 student at Xavier School in Greenhills, said he is thrilled by the thought of planting trees especially with so many children like him doing the same thing. "I am really excited because I know that the

'TSIKITINGS'/A27

MetroFeedback

Spreading the 'butterfly effect'

CONGRATULATIONS for featuring in your Metro section articles on climate change, global warming, healing the earth, solid waste management and the "Trees for Life" program activities by the DENR, Green Army, Mother Earth, Artists for the Environment and the AFP. Thank you, too, for writing about the tree planting activities of various sectors as a tribute to the late President Ramon Magsaysay on his centennial next year, and other environment-related issues.

Reading the articles is both pleasurable and "healing" for the soul, giving one the feeling that something positive is being done to address environmental problems that are putting life in the Philippines and the world in great peril. These articles present an alternative reality to work on, something to hope for, not only for the present but also for the future.

Kudos to the media, especially the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Metro section staff, for not only helping educate readers on these issues but also giving them the idea that they are not just passive watchers and hapless victims of events but are, in fact, active agents of change whose little actions in their own little corner of the world—can make significant changes, whose effects may be global, like the "butterfly effect" in nature. (In the "New Science," the "butterfly effect" tells us that the mere fluttering of the wings of a butterfly in Hong Kong can unexpectedly create a strong storm in the Philippines!)

My students said that apart from being informative, the articles are also inspiring, challenging them to do even better in contributing to the growing movement of healing the earth. They added that every negative report on environment degradation can be countered with creative action so the negative would just dissolve and flow with the positive forces.

We look forward to reading more of these articles in your section, hoping for that time when a critical mass of environmentally aware and friendly populace shall be generated to effect a genuine transformative force in healing the earth. You have our admiration and support. Thank you.

GRACE ODAL-DEVORA
College of Arts and Sciences
University of the Philippines-Manila

Team to lead Met restoration efforts

METROBRIEFS

Under investigation

THE MANILA police is looking into possible negligence on the part of Malate Catholic School officials following the death of a Grade 3 student who fell from the fourth floor of the school building last week. Case investigator PO2 Jaime Gonzales of the Manila Police District said that an inspection of the building, which is under construction, showed that there were no safety barriers for the protection of students. Police are still trying to determine if Kristine Ariane Cuenca, 9, jumped or accidentally fell to her death on Sept. 17. The death certificate issued by the Medical Center Manila where Cuenca was rushed after the incident said that the girl suffered "traumatic head injuries."

Allison W. Lopez

Hope for the homeless

FIFTY families that were displaced from the "Little Vietnam" community in Quiapo will be given priority in the government's relocation program, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. The relocation of the families, whose shanties were dismantled in the crime-infested area in June, was part of an agreement that was reached recently by the MMDA and Manila city officials.

DJ Yap

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM has formed a six-man committee to work on the immediate restoration of the Metropolitan Theater—fondly referred to as the Met and considered the "grand dame" of Manila's theaters—which has fallen into decay over the past years.

The committee will be cochaired by former Kapisanan ng mga Artista ng Pelikulang Pilipino head German Moreno and Lim's chief of staff, Ric de Guzman. Vice Mayor Isko Moreno will be the vice chair while Councilor Edward Maceda, Laguna Rep. Dan Fernandez and INQUIRER columnist Ambeth Ocampo will be the committee members.

Lim said the committee will determine, among others, where the P50 million previously given by President Macapagal-Arroyo to the National Commission on Culture and the Arts for the Met's rehabilitation went, what repairs had been done on its edifice and how much work was still needed to restore it to its original glory.

The Art Deco building constructed in 1931 by Juan Arellano was badly damaged during wartime. It was rebuilt in 1978 by former First Lady Imelda Marcos but its condition again deteriorated in the 90s.

The Met finally closed down in 1996 following a long-running dispute between the Government Service Insurance System and the City of Manila over its ownership and management.

In 2004, the GSIS and city government finally agreed to set aside their differences and, with the NCCA, signed a tripartite agreement on a work action plan for its restoration.

DID YOU KNOW

THE LATE National Scientist Juan Salcedo was born on Sept. 23, 1904, in Pasay City. He is known for launching rice rich in thiamine or Vitamin B1 to prevent beriberi, which used to be a leading cause of death in the Philippines.

In 1955, Salcedo received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for his achievements in medical science. Salcedo, a graduate of the University of the Philippines and Columbia University, served in the 1950s as health minister, chair of the Food Commission and chair of the Philippine National Red Cross. He died in 1988 and was buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

METRO Citizen's call

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Living in darkness

MERALCO has not reinstalled our power lines that have been down for a long time now. It has been six months of living in darkness for us here at the Dela Cruz Compound and Delnor side. Calling the attention of our Las Piñas-based officials, especially Senate President Manny Villar. We need your help badly. Anyone who can pay us a visit will see how miserable we have been for six long months now.

DERIC ESPIRITU, 28, Las Piñas City

Not Metrogwapo at all

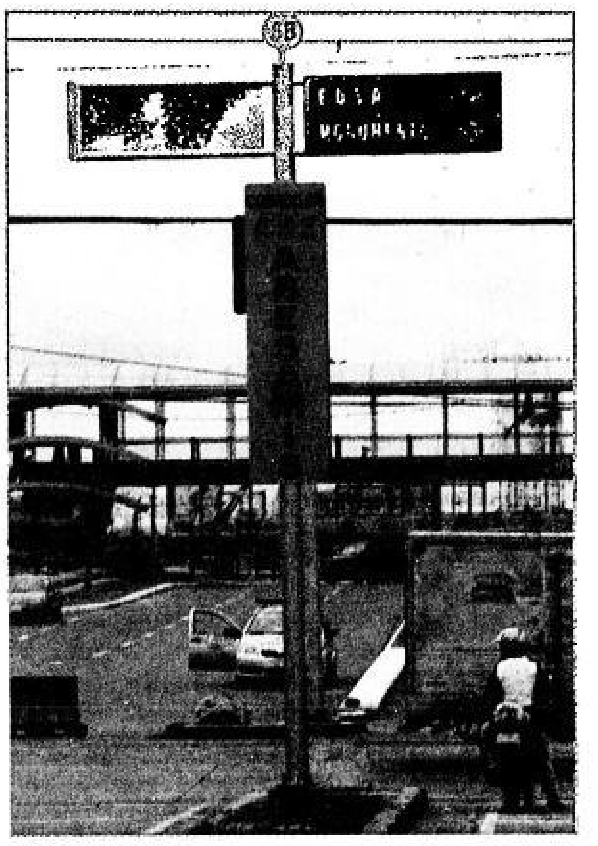
JEEP barkers at the Pantranco terminal at the corner of Quezon Avenue and Roces Avenue behave lewdly toward female pedestrians and extort money from drivers even without assisting them. Metropolitan Manila Development Authority personnel can't seem to do anything about the situation. Whatever happened to Bayani Fernando's Metrogwapo program?

ANDREA, 24, Quezon City

More lights on C3 Road, please!

THERE is insufficient lighting (street lights and traffic lights) on C3 Road here in the Caloocan-Malabon area. Concrete posts have also been built in the most unlikely places, like the middle of the road (well, almost). You see the posts when you're coming from the Smokey Mountain area turning right to C3 Road. I think there was a road widening project before, but the posts were not relocated after it was completed. Since the road is not well lighted, the posts are a hazard. As for the traffic lights, it is high time these are installed in several intersections here in the C3 and Dagat Dagatan area. I was a victim of a car accident at that exact intersection, so I should know. Must we wait for other accidents to happen before we see any action?

CARLA MARIE MARCAIDA, Caloocan City



HARD-TO-SEE TRAFFIC LIGHTS JOAN BONDOC
Rolando Garros, 27, of UP Diliman, Quezon City, sent this text: "A billboard displaying the name of Councilor Abesamis at the corner of Mindanao and North Avenue in Quezon City blocks the traffic lights."

Bad cable service

WE MOVED to Filinvest 2, Quezon City, last December and the cable service (Skycable) is terrible. Interruptions are normal occurrences at least three or four times a month. We get the same answers from customer service each time we file a complaint, like loss of signal or fiber optics problems. They told me to contact their manager regarding the situation, including my request for credit adjustments. To date, we have not received a single response.

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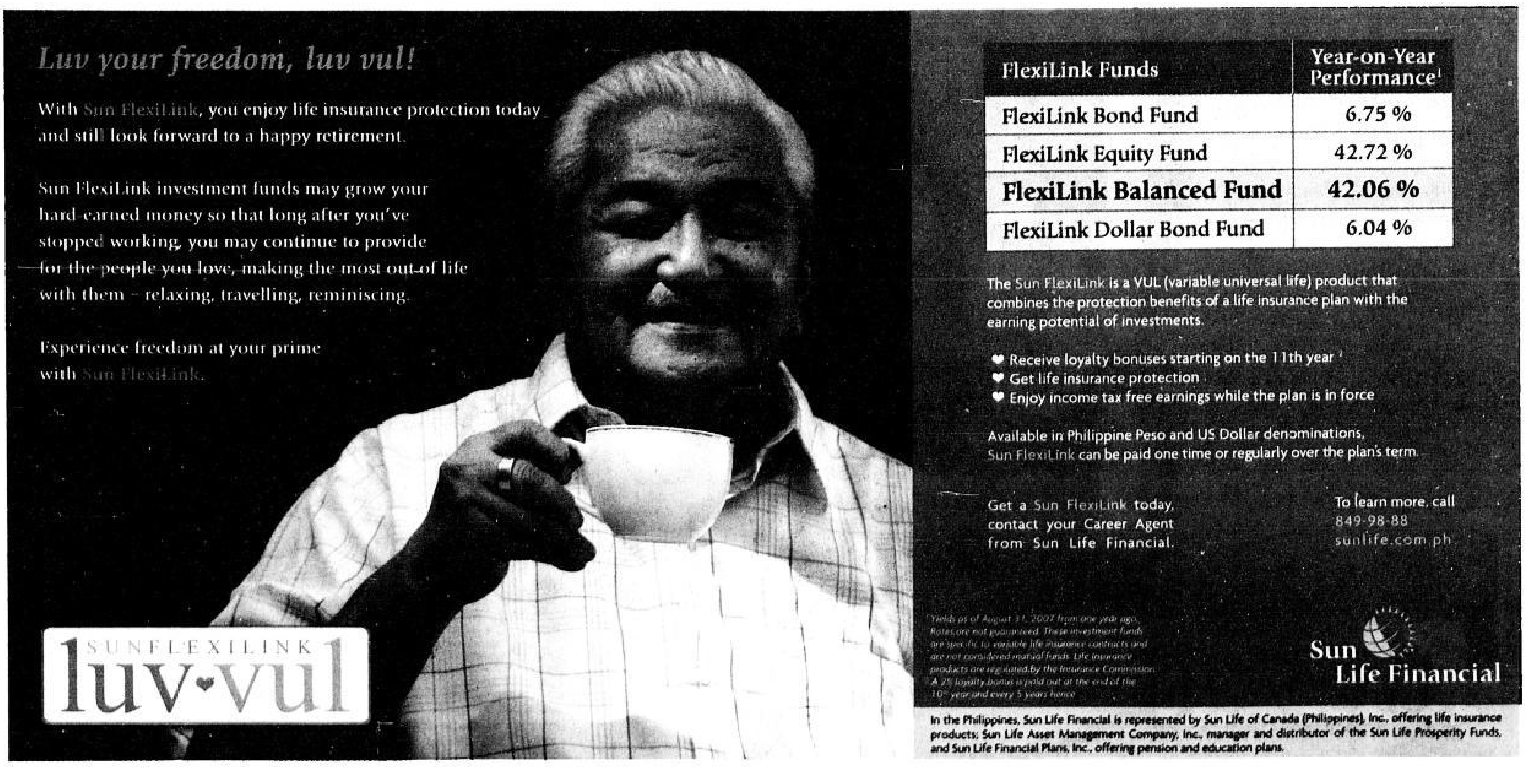

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[2] A 2% loyalty bonus is paid out at the end of the 10th year and every 5 years hence

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Pasig police ready to secure big-time bank clients

By Kristine L. Alave

THE PASIG CITY POLICE IS WILLING to provide security to people about to withdraw large amounts of cash from banks to protect them from motorcycle-riding robbers, city police chief, Senior Supt. Frank Uyami, said.

"We can escort them, why not?" Uyami told the INQUIRER in an interview. He added, however, that so far, no one has come to them to ask for police escorts.

Uyami noted that it is part of their duty to provide assistance to the public and reduce robbery incidents.

He added that clients could demand security from their banks, although they would have to pay for it.

Uyami lamented that most of the 170 banks in Pasig City do not have surveillance cameras inside and outside their buildings. The banks, he observed, are scrimping on their security equipment, making it difficult for the police to trace robbery suspects.

He explained that many of the robbery syndicates employ "spotters" inside the bank who take note of clients withdrawing large amounts of cash. The spotters then give a description of their potential victims to their cohorts who are waiting outside the bank, Uyami said.

By installing security cameras inside their premises, the banks can help the police identify the spotters in robbery incidents, the police chief said. "If we can get their tipsters, we can also get them," Uyami said, referring to members of the syndicates.

He urged the banks to strengthen their security measures as "it is their clients who get victimized."

Last week, four armed suspects on motorcycles shot and robbed two bank patrons who had just withdrawn P600,000 from the Bank of the Philippine Islands branch in Barangay Bagong Ilog, Pasig City.

'Tsikitings' to create ...

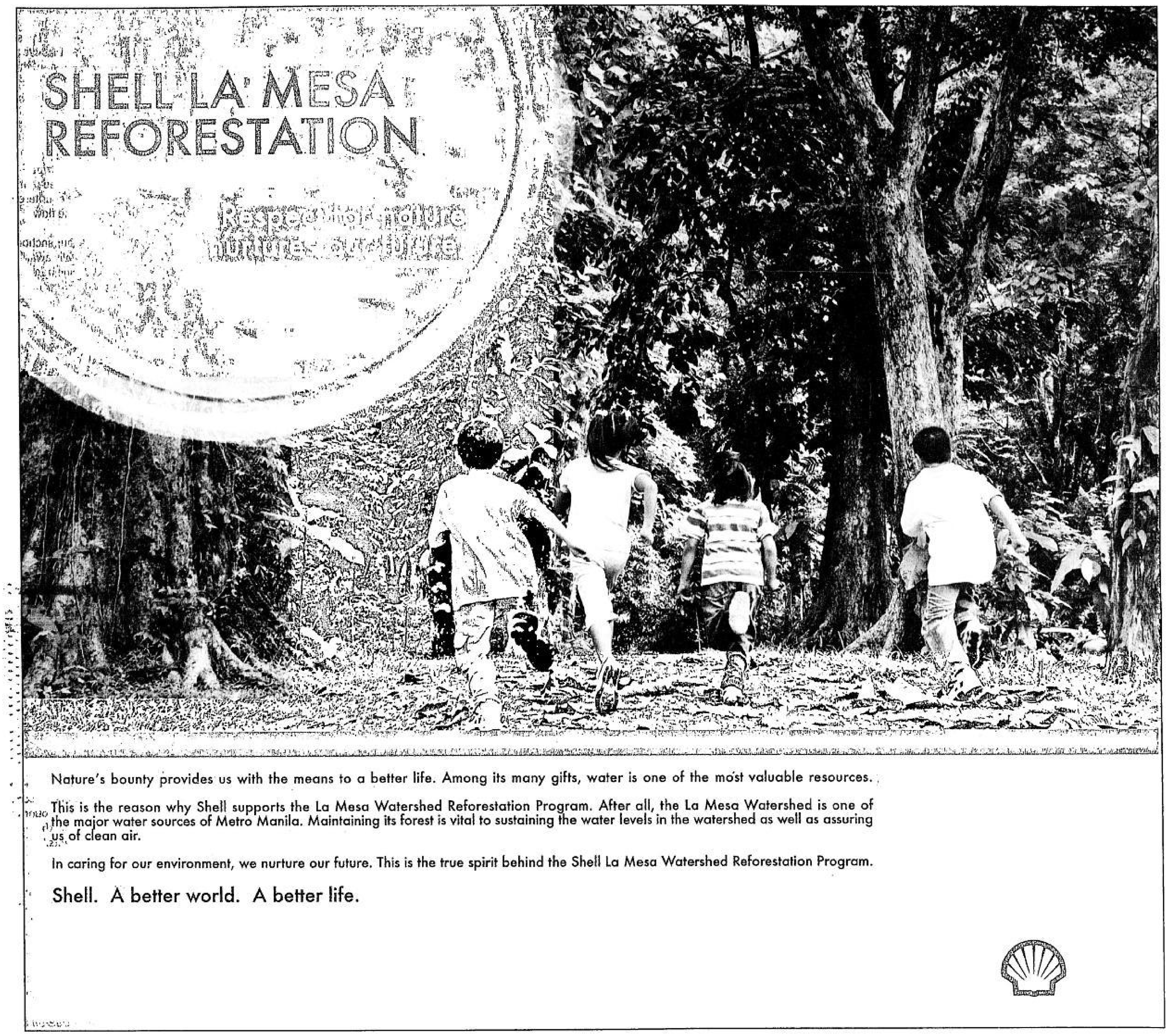
From page A26

more trees we plant, the lesser air pollution there would be," he said.

But the responsibility of the children of "Tsikiting Gubat", Lola O said, does not end after they have planted the trees. "We will also teach the 'tsikitings' how to take care of their plants until they mature to full-grown trees," she added.

Lola O, whose residence in Quezon City provided the perfect backdrop for the event, is the perfect example of what she envisions to happen. At least 100-sq m of land around her house, she told the INQUIRER, is home to different kinds of trees like mango, apple, talisay, kaimito, banana and fire trees, among others. Many of the trees grew without the benefit of gardening, she pointed out.

Lola O said that she is happy about the warm reception the project received from parents who brought their children to the event. "It is about time we bring the forests back into the city, back into our backyards," she said.



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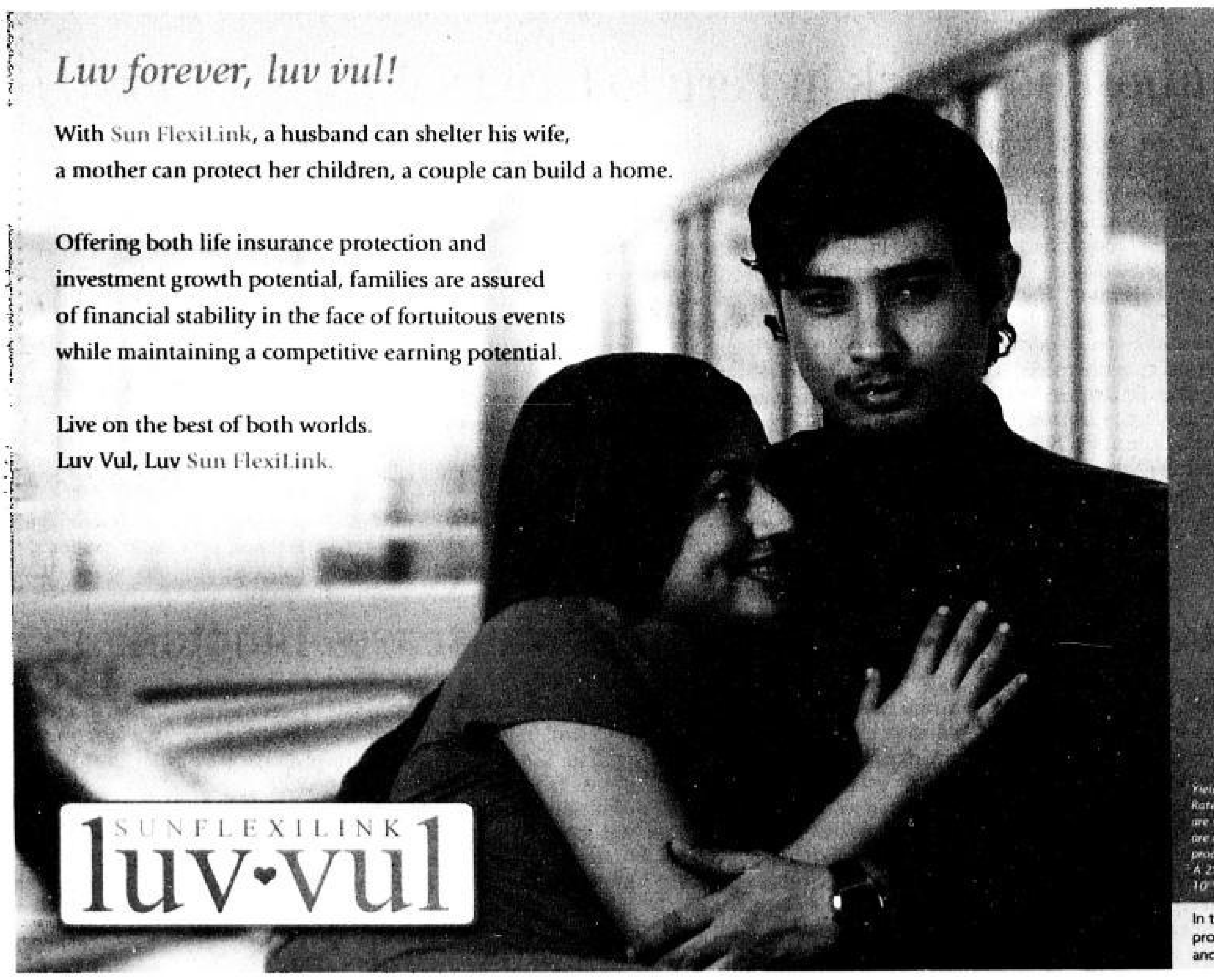

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'Historic' deal reached on cutting ozone threats

MONTREAL—NEARLY 200 countries have agreed to accelerate the elimination of chemicals that threaten the ozone and exacerbate global warming, the United Nations Environmental Program announced Saturday.

UNEP chief Achim Steiner hailed the agreement by governments to move forward bans on dangerous hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) as a "vital signal" in efforts to slow climate change and welcomed China's willingness to back the deal.

"It is perhaps the most important breakthrough in an international environment negotiation process for at least five or six years," Steiner said.

"Historic is an often overused word but not in the case of this agreement made in Montreal. Governments had a golden opportunity to deal with the twin challenges of climate change and protecting the ozone layer and governments took it," Steiner said.

The agreement came as world leaders were set for an unprecedented UN summit on Monday aimed at breaking the deadlock in efforts to craft a global treaty on greenhouse gases.

Under the deal reached at the UN-sponsored conference, developed countries will phase out the production of HCFCs by 2020 and developing states have until 2030—10 years earlier than previously promised.

The agreement changes the timetable that had been set in 1987 under the Montreal Protocol, which aims to eliminate the use of HCFCs and related chemicals, often found in refrigerators, fire retardants and hairspray.

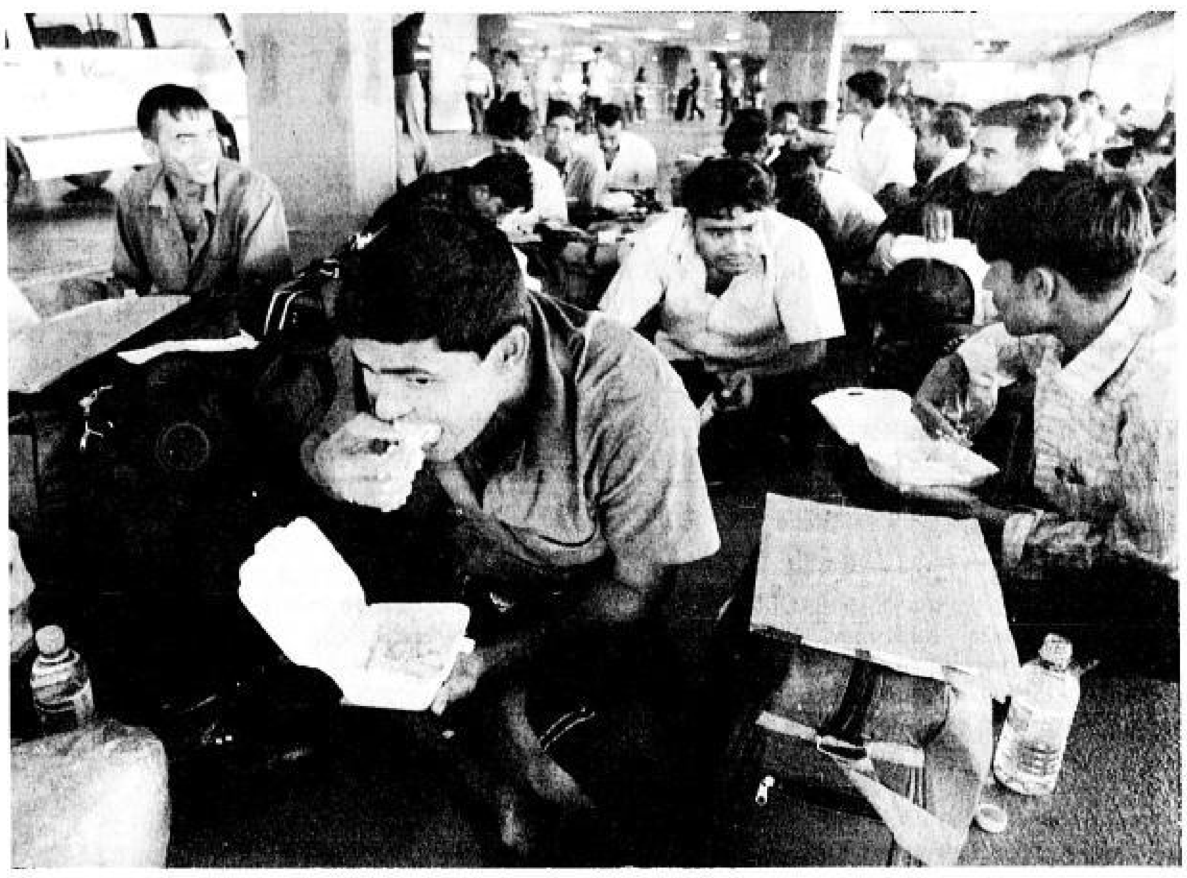
"The precise and final savings in terms of greenhouse gas emissions could amount to several billions of tons illustrating the complementarities of international environmental agreements," Steiner said.

Canada's Environment Minister John Baird called the success of the week-long meeting of 190 countries and the European Union a major step in battling global warming.

"The agreement to speed up the elimination of HCFCs will go down in the books as another successful chapter in the Montreal protocols," he said.

"But it will also stand out as a pivotal moment in the international fight against global warming ... It's no secret that the Montreal Protocol had the benefit of helping the ozone layer and slowing devastating effects of climate change."

The aim of the original and newest Montreal agreements was to slow and eventually help reverse the expanding hole in the ozone layer, which protects the earth and people from harmful solar rays which can cause skin cancer and accelerate global warming. *AFP*



MIGRANT workers from Bangladesh eat at an airport parking lot which has been turned into an immigration depot in Sepang, Malaysia, on Sept. 20. AP

Migrant workers in limbo at KL airport waiting for employers

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—Thousands of migrant workers are being forced to camp for days in a stuffy car park at the airport in Malaysia's biggest city, sleeping on the floor surrounded by garbage and urine, while they wait for their new employers to collect them.

Every day, more than 1,000 migrant workers arrive at the Kuala Lumpur international airport, with the number swelling to 3,000 at the weekend, said Saravana Kumar, deputy head of immigration at the airport during an interview last week.

Most of them arrive from Bangladesh, and a few from Nepal, Pakistan, India and other countries, eager to join a burgeoning labor force of menial workers, such as carpenters, cleaners, security guards, waiters and shop clerks who help keep Malaysia's economic success humming.

But complaints that migrants were loitering among tourists at the pristine airport, sprawling about with their piles of scruffy luggage, prompted authorities to set up a makeshift immigration processing center in the airport's multistory car park, Saravana said.

The processing center was meant to facilitate a speedy processing—within eight hours of their arrival—and enable immigration officials to keep track of everyone in one place. But some workers are forced to spend several nights in the car park because their employers or agents are either late to collect them, or do not show up at all, Saravana said.

"Our objective was to give them a better facility. But when the number goes beyond control, that's when we get stuck," Saravana said, briskly walking around the car park, where groups of tired-looking foreigners were huddled quietly.

The plight of the workers is the rarely-seen underbelly of Malaysia's economic success. With increasing prosperity, job opportunities have increased and Malaysians are unwilling to do the low-status jobs, which are now being farmed out to imported workers from poor countries.

While an average monthly salary of 500 ringgit ($145) is pittance for locals, it is a princely sum back home for the estimated 1.8 million foreign workers who now form the backbone of the country's labor force.

Officials say agents and employers sometimes show up late to save costs — contracted workers can arrive in batches on different flights. To transport all of them together to the work place is cheaper than making several trips. Sometimes there is miscommunication between local agents and their counterparts in labor-supplying countries.

Some workers become victims of outright fraud — agents never show up and pocket the fee — usually a sum equivalent of more than $2,000 — which the workers had paid for the recruitment. *AP*

The oldest trees on Earth: 4,700 years old and still durable

By Tangi Quemener

SCHULMAN GROVE, CALIfornia—They have neither the soaring majesty nor the celebrity of the giant redwood, but in one respect the bristlecone pine is the undisputed king of trees: longevity.

Scattered on a remote mountainside of eastern California, these gnarled, twisted specimens are the oldest living organisms on Earth, the most senior among them some 4,700 years old.

If the mere sight of trees that pre-date the ancient Pyramids of Giza is not enough to take the breath away, the hour-long trek to reach them is: these natural wonders are found at a rarified altitude of 3,300 meters.

The bristlecone's astounding durability is partly explained by the harsh climate that they have endured throughout the ages, according to Patti Wells, a US Forest Service naturalist, who has studied the trees for 37 years.

In the summer, the trees bask in temperatures of 25 degrees Celsius, but in winter they are frozen in bone-chilling sub-zero temperatures that can reach minus 30 degrees. Roaring winds of 320 kph pummel the forest, which is also blanketed in snow up to three meters deep.

Only the bristlecone is able to withstand such extreme conditions, botanists say. The reasons are partly to do with the tree's unique make-up and unforgiving location.

THE ANCIENT Bristlecone Pine trees are in the White Mountains of the Inyo National Forest near Bishop, California. AFP

Because the trees grow slowly, they have developed an impervious resinous wood, protecting them from insect infestations and mushrooms. The high altitude of the forest also means that potentially devastating fires in the region don't have as much oxygen to feed them, Wells said.

At first glance bristlecone pines often appear to be dead. As the tree ages outer layers of bark die, leaving only a strip of connective tissue stretching from the roots to the few branches that remain alive. The deadwood of "Pinus Longevae" is so solid that it does not rot.

The location of the oldest tree in the forest, "Methuselah," said to be over 5,000 years old, is kept secret in order to protect it. *AFP*

Separatists push Canada closer to polls

OTTAWA—CANADA SHIFTED closer to an early general election on Saturday when the leader of a major opposition party threatened to vote against the government unless it met a string of demands Ottawa is likely to reject.

The minority Conservative government, which says it wants to stay in power until late 2009, faces a vote of confidence in Parliament next month and can only survive with the help of an opposition party.

The separatist Bloc Quebecois has kept the government in power by supporting the 2006 and 2007 budgets. But leader Gilles Duceppe said on Saturday the Conservatives must meet five nonnegotiable conditions to get his backing again.

These include respecting the Kyoto protocol on climate change, something Prime Minister Stephen Harper says is impossible. Harper was to unveil his government's plans on Oct. 16 in the so-called speech from the throne.

Duceppe outlined his demands and then said: "We're waiting for the speech from the throne. Be ready. If these things aren't in it, we'll be having an election."

Harper spokeswoman Sandra Buckler said Duceppe, who seeks independence for French-speaking Quebec, should not be reckless by threatening an election she insisted Quebecers do not want.

Three by-elections in Quebec last week showed support for the Bloc is slipping, in part because some supporters are unhappy about Duceppe's past backing of Harper.

If legislators defeat the speech from the throne, an election will be triggered automatically.

The Conservatives now hold just 126 of the 308 seats in Parliament, and polls show the most likely result of an election would be another minority Conservative government.

"The Bloc Quebecois fully intends -- and is very willing -- to stand up to defend Quebec's interests in Ottawa," Duceppe said in a speech in the Quebec town of Rimouski.

"And if the result of standing up for Quebec is a general election, we'll be on the road. And we'll win," he added. *Reuters*

US cities' Wi-Fi dreams fading fast

WASHINGTON—AMBITIOUS plans for big Wi-Fi networks to provide free or low-cost wireless Internet access are being abandoned or scaled back by US cities as the economics of the deals turn out to be more challenging than expected.

San Francisco and Chicago in recent weeks abruptly halted plans to set up municipal Wi-Fi networks while Internet giant Earthlink, a partner for a number of cities, has begun a reorganization that will limit new projects.

Wi-Fi, one of the most popular standards for wireless Internet access, had been seen as a means of connecting more people at a relatively low cost, and city leaders across the United States had been rushing to use the technology for "digital inclusion" programs for low-income residents.

But cities and companies are finding the economics more difficult, with many expensive access points needed and relatively small numbers of subscribers signing on.

"I think it's a troubled market," said Daryl Schoolar, senior analyst at the research firm In-Stat.

"Some thought a lot of people would rush out with laptops and would use it. But Wi-Fi doesn't really penetrate buildings well. And people use Wi-Fi mainly in hotels, airports and cafes."

Although some privately operated Wi-Fi deployments in these high-density locations have become popular, analysts say the notion of a large municipal network blanketing cities is questionable.

MuniWireless, a website tracking municipal projects, counts over 400 cities in planning or development of Wi-Fi networks. But analysts say only a small percentage of these are operating, and many are primarily for police or public-safety access. *AFP*

Fujimori now back in Peru to face trial

LIMA—SEVEN YEARS AFTER fleeing Peru, former president Alberto Fujimori was back in Lima on Saturday to face trial on charges of corruption and responsibility in death squad massacres during his rule.

Fujimori, 69, was immediately flown by helicopter to a temporary detention facility at the Special Police Operations Directorate (DIREOS) after landing in Lima following his extradition from Chile.

Fujimori had resigned by fax from a Tokyo hotel in 2000 after a 10-year presidency that ended with a corruption scandal and was followed by a long legal battle by the Peruvian government to secure his extradition.

Japan, which granted him citizenship because his parents were Japanese, refused to send him to Peru, but he landed unexpectedly in Chile's capital Santiago in November 2005 in a bid to make a political comeback.

Chilean authorities kept him under house arrest for the better part of his 22 months there until Chile's Supreme Court ordered his extradition Friday on charges that could put him in jail for decades.

At DIREOS headquarters, Fujimori will be held in a special detention facility made with reinforced concrete walls and bulletproof windows that has a bedroom, a study and a bathroom.

He will be allowed to go out on the patio for two hours a day and will have access to newspapers and magazines but no television. During visits, he will have to speak to his family and attorneys through a window.

Peruvian authorities have charged Fujimori with corruption and responsibility in the killings of 15 people in Lima's Barrios Altos neighborhood in 1991 and of nine students and a professor at La Cantuta University in 1992. *AFP*

PRIMER ENCUENTRO NACIONAL DE BASES

A SUPPORTER holds an image of Fujimori at a protest outside a police base in Lima on Sept. 22. AP

Britain farmers grapple with new disease–Bluetongue

LONDON—BRITISH FARMERS grappling to contain outbreaks of the foot-and-mouth virus faced the threat on Sunday of a new disease after a cow was diagnosed with bluetongue, the first case recorded in Britain.

Britain's deputy chief veterinarian Fred Landeg told British television stations on Saturday that a cow on a cattle and sheep farm near Ipswich, Suffolk, northeast of London, tested positive for bluetongue.

The cow was to be slaughtered, other animals on the farm tested to see if they were also infected, and restrictions put in place at the site, Landeg and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) said.

National Farmers Union (NFU) President Peter Kendall told BBC television that bluetongue "is definitely not as serious as foot-and-mouth but it is of major concern to us," as it is one more disease to deal with.

He said the disease is carried by insects like midges and is not transferred from animal to animal.

The foot-and-mouth virus rarely affects humans but can devastate the cattle and sheep industry, as it did in Britain in 2001.

Although bluetongue only affects animals and not human beings, some strains can be particularly virulent in sheep, according to Landeg, who said this particular strain was not yet known. *AFP*

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Moderate Fukuda picked to lead Japan

TOKYO—MODERATE VETERAN YASUO FUKUDA easily won election as president of Japan's struggling ruling party Sunday, assuring his selection as the new prime minister in a parliamentary vote later this week.

Fukuda won 330 votes to former Foreign Minister Taro Aso's 197 votes, the party announced, giving Fukuda 63 percent of the ballots.

Fukuda, 71, the son of a prime minister from the 1970s, has vowed to keep his country in the fight against terrorism, improve relations with Asia and address inequalities in the world's second-largest economy.

Fukuda vowed on Sunday to rebuild the popularity of the LDP, which has plunged under a year of scandals and policy missteps by outgoing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who has been hospitalized since announcing on Sept. 12 that he would resign.

"It is natural that we are facing public criticism," Fukuda said in a joint appearance with his rival, former Foreign Minister Taro Aso, on national broadcaster NHK. "We must make efforts patiently to regain public trust."

Fukuda also pushed his key policies: Further engage North Korea diplomatically, push for extension of Japan's naval mission in support of US-led forces in Afghanistan, and give aid to rural regions left behind by the economic recovery.

"We need to show our intention to continue the mission as a message to the international society," Fukuda said of the Afghan mission, which the opposition has vowed to defeat in parliament. "If this drags on too long we might send a wrong message to the world as if we were not committed to making that contribution."

Fukuda, who served as chief Cabinet secretary from 2000 to 2004, has the support of the major factions of the LDP. His dominance over Aso, a policy hawk who served as Abe's foreign minister until August, was so clear by Sunday that morning papers had already given him the title of LDP president, and he was asked on NHK if he would choose Aso as his foreign minister.

Fukuda would inherit a political environment and LDP left in serious disarray.

Abe, 53, came into office a year ago with high support ratings and an unquestioned ruling coalition dominance in parliament.

But he quickly frittered away those advantages as his Cabinet overflowed with money scandals and he pressed ahead with a nationalist agenda while people demanded more attention to bread-and-butter issues such as pensions.

The LDP suffered a serious blow in elections in July for the Upper House of parliament in which the resurgent opposition seized control of the chamber, heightening calls for snap elections for the Lower House as well.

Abe apologized to the party in a message read after Fukuda's selection.

"I apologize to Aso and all LDP lawmakers, party members and the Japanese public for causing a political vacuum," said the note.

Fukuda has arrived as an antidote to Abe. A sober, brainy party elder, Fukuda—son of a prime minister from the 1970s—has vowed to concentrate on down-to-earth issues such as economic equality and growth, while seeking warmer ties with the rest of Asia.

It was unclear, however, how long Fukuda would be able to stave off calls for Lower House elections. He has termed such calls "understandable."

Media reports said the LDP wanted to pass the Afghan measure and the national budget early next year before dissolving the Lower House.

"When the public and lawmakers strongly voice a need to dissolve the parliament, I think it wouldn't be good to resist that call," Fukuda said on NHK. *AP*

FORMER chief Cabinet secretary Yasuo Fukuda (center) bows to parliamentarians of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) after he was chosen as the party's president on Sept. 23. REUTERS

VISITORS ride a merry-go-round on the first day of Oktoberfest in Munich on Sept. 22. Millions of beer drinkers from around the world have descended on the Bavarian capital of Munich for Oktoberfest, the world's biggest and famous beer festival. REUTERS

Falling German birthrate dispels baby miracle myth

By Nicholas Kulish

BERLIN—IN BABY-STARVED Germany, the hip eastern Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg appears to be nothing short of a miracle.

Strollers jam the sidewalks and block the narrow cafes. Helmholtzplatz in the northern part of the neighborhood crawl with infants and toddlers.

But the Prenzlauer Berg miracle is the reproductive equivalent of fool's gold.

"If you look at the different quarters of Berlin, Prenzlauer Berg has one of the lowest birthrates," says Reiner Klingholz, director of the Berlin Institute for Population and Development, who has been trying to debunk the myth since late 2004 with mixed results.

Although the German government has begun to address the birthrate, it was particularly slow out of the gates in dealing with its low birthrate, and, since 2003, the contraction of its population, in that first year by just 5,000 people, but in 2006 by a 130,000. The German population stands at 82.4 million people.

According to European Union statistics, the "crude birthrate"—defined as births per thousand inhabitants—has declined in Germany in each of the last nine years, from 9.9 in 1997 to 8.2 in 2006. And deaths have outnumbered live births in Germany since 1972—but a muscular response by the government is.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and her minister for family affairs, Ursula von der Leyen, have made it a prominent issue. A program known as Elterngeld, or, literally translated, parent money, which began this year, replaces up to two-thirds of a new parent's salary to a maximum of 1,800 euros a month, about $2,530, if he or she decides to stay home. It replaced a program that only helped lower-income families with at most 450 euros, about $630, a month.

The new program lasts for a year for one parent or 14 months if both mother and father share the time off. The government has allocated 4 billion euros, about $5.6 billion, a year for the program, which it reported fulfilled all expectations in the first half of the year, with applications rising to 140,000 people in the second quarter from 60,000 in the first.

The federal government will spend another 4 billion euros as part of a 12 billion euro program including city and state money to build day care centers in 2008 through 2013. *NYT*

US security firm faces criminal charges in Iraq

BAGHDAD—THE IRAQI GOVernment expects to refer criminal charges to the Iraqi courts within days a shooting here by a private American security company, the state minister for national security affairs said Saturday.

The minister, Shirwan al-Waili, said that the government had received little information so far from the US side of a joint investigation. But he said that the Iraqi investigation of the shooting, in which at least eight Iraqis were killed, was largely completed and that he believed the findings were definitive.

"The shots fired on the Iraqis were unjustifiable," he said. "It was harsh and horrible."

Although al-Waili did not spell out exactly what the investigative committee would recommend to the Iraqi criminal court, a preliminary report of findings by the Interior Ministry, National Security Ministry and Defense Ministry stated that "the murder of citizens in cold blood in the Nisour area by Blackwater is considered a terrorist action against civilians just like any other terrorist operations."

"The criminals will be referred to the Iraqi court system," it stated.

There were reports that the security company, Blackwater USA, was also facing a possible federal investigation in the United States into whether the company shipped unlicensed automatic weapons and military goods to Iraq. The News & Observer in Raleigh, N.C., reported that two former Blackwater employees had pleaded guilty to weapons charges in North Carolina, where the company is based, and were cooperating with federal officials in the broader investigation.

In a statement issued Saturday, Blackwater denied that it had done anything wrong.

The shooting under investigation in Iraq began near midday last Sunday when guards for the private security firm Blackwater USA fired at Iraqi civilians for reasons that neither the company nor the US government, which is also investigating, have yet fully explained. *NYT*

Bush to ask $195 billion to fund Iraq, Afghan wars

WASHINGTON—THE WHITE House will ask Congress next week to approve another massive spending measure for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan totaling nearly $200 billion, The Los Angeles Times reported on its website late Saturday.

Citing unnamed Pentagon officials, the newspaper said if President George W. Bush's spending request is approved, 2008 will be the most expensive year of the Iraq war.

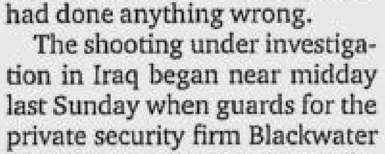
US war costs have continued to grow because of the additional combat forces sent to Iraq this year and because of efforts to quickly ramp up production of new equipment, such as mine-resistant trucks, the report said.

The new trucks can cost three to six times as much as an armored Humvee, according to the paper.

The Bush administration said earlier this year that it probably would need $147.5 billion for fiscal 2008, but Pentagon officials now say that and $47 billion more will be required, The Times said.

That would spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan at about $195 billion in fiscal 2008, which begins in Oct. 1, an increase of around 12 percent from the $173 billion spent this year.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and other officials are to formally present the full request at a Senate appropriations committee hearing Wednesday, the report said.



BUSH at a press conference at the White House on Sept. 20. AFP

When costs of CIA operations and embassy expenses are added, the war in Iraq currently costs taxpayers about $12 billion a month, said Winslow Wheeler, a former Republican congressional budget aide who is a senior fellow at the Center for Defense Information in Washington.

"Everybody predicts declines, but they haven't occurred, and 2008 will be higher than 2007," the paper quotes Wheeler as saying. "It all depends on what happens in Iraq, but thus far it has continued to get bloodier and more expensive." *AFP*

Vague laws, politics seen behind Taiwan graft

TAIPEI—TAIWAN'S TWO MAIN parties are taking advantage of legal loopholes to have their rivals charged with graft in a bid to win voters in the run-up to next year's presidential election, analysts say.

The latest in a series of high-profile cases that have rocked the island over the past year involves Vice President Annette Lu, who was charged Friday with corruption and forgery for allegedly submitting false expense reports.

Lu is a member of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which is battling to remain in power after President Chen Shui-bian leaves office in May. Analysts say the battle has shifted to the courts, and turned ugly.

"The whole thing is a bit out of control," says Hsu Yung-ming, an assistant research fellow at Taiwan's top academic body Academia Sinica.

"The power struggle between the ruling and opposition parties has become more bloody" since key DPP and Kuomintang members started hurling accusations of corruption at each other, and sending "evidence" to prosecutors, Hsu says.

Political science professor Liao Da-chi of National Sun Yat-sen University agreed, saying both camps have been using the loopholes to "smear the image" of the rivals.

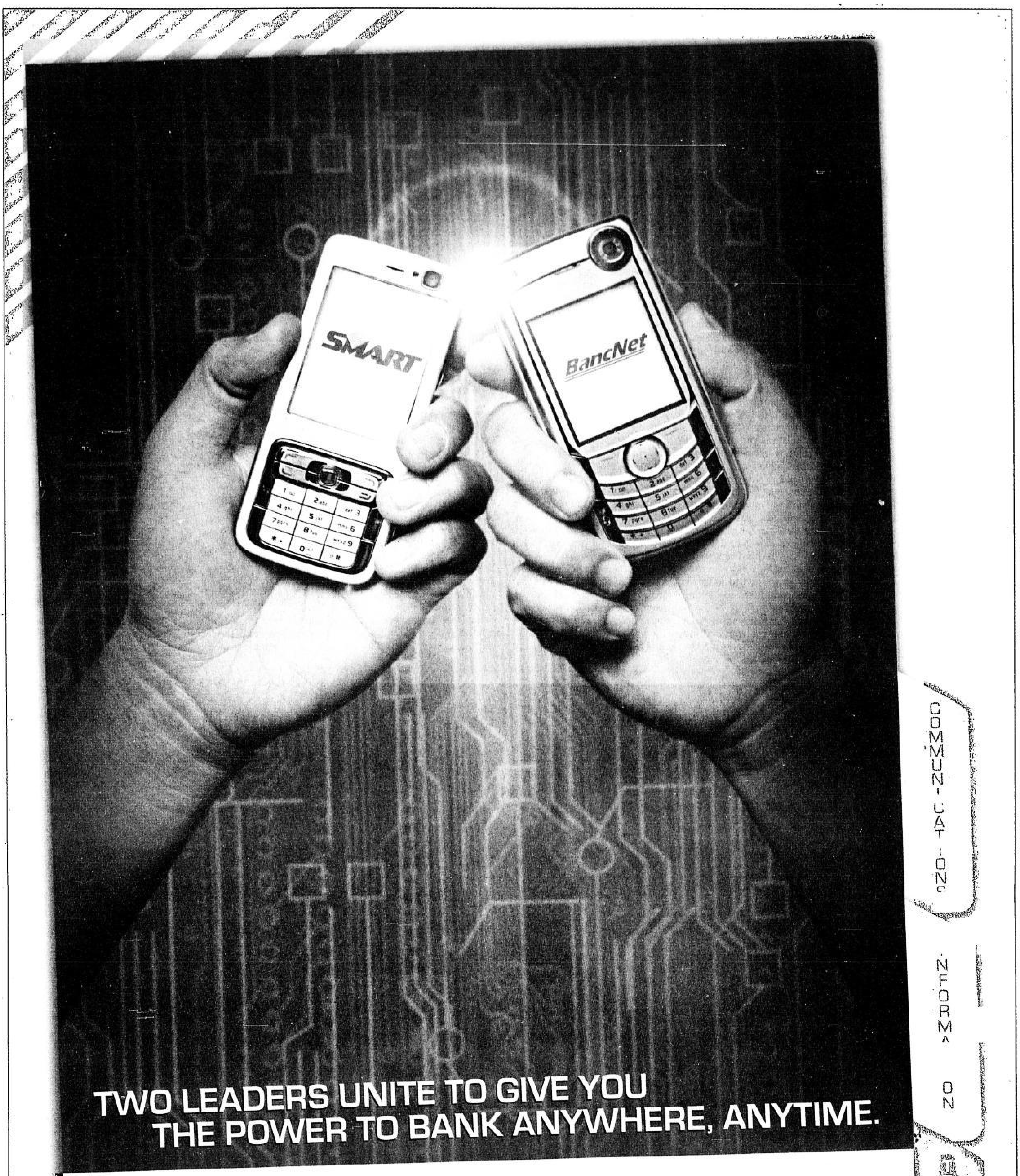
Analysts say the proliferation of corruption cases in Taiwanese politics stems from a decades-old system of allotting special funds to top government officials, put in place by the nationalist Kuomintang.

The rules are vague and full of loopholes, allowing some to argue that the special funds are in fact a kind of "subsidy" for officials—and others to say that a high number of well-placed politicians are breaking the law.

"This is indeed a problem left over from the past ... the government auditing rules governing the use of such funds are not clear," says Liu Bih-rong, a political science professor at Soochow University.

"I believe a majority of the government officials involved had no intention of embezzling such money."

"They just followed the rules that have been observed for decades. But they found they have became a suspect of graft overnight." *AFP*



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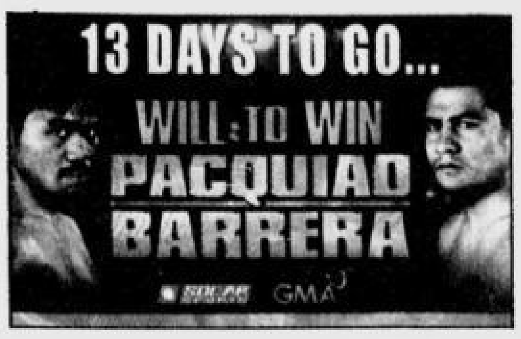

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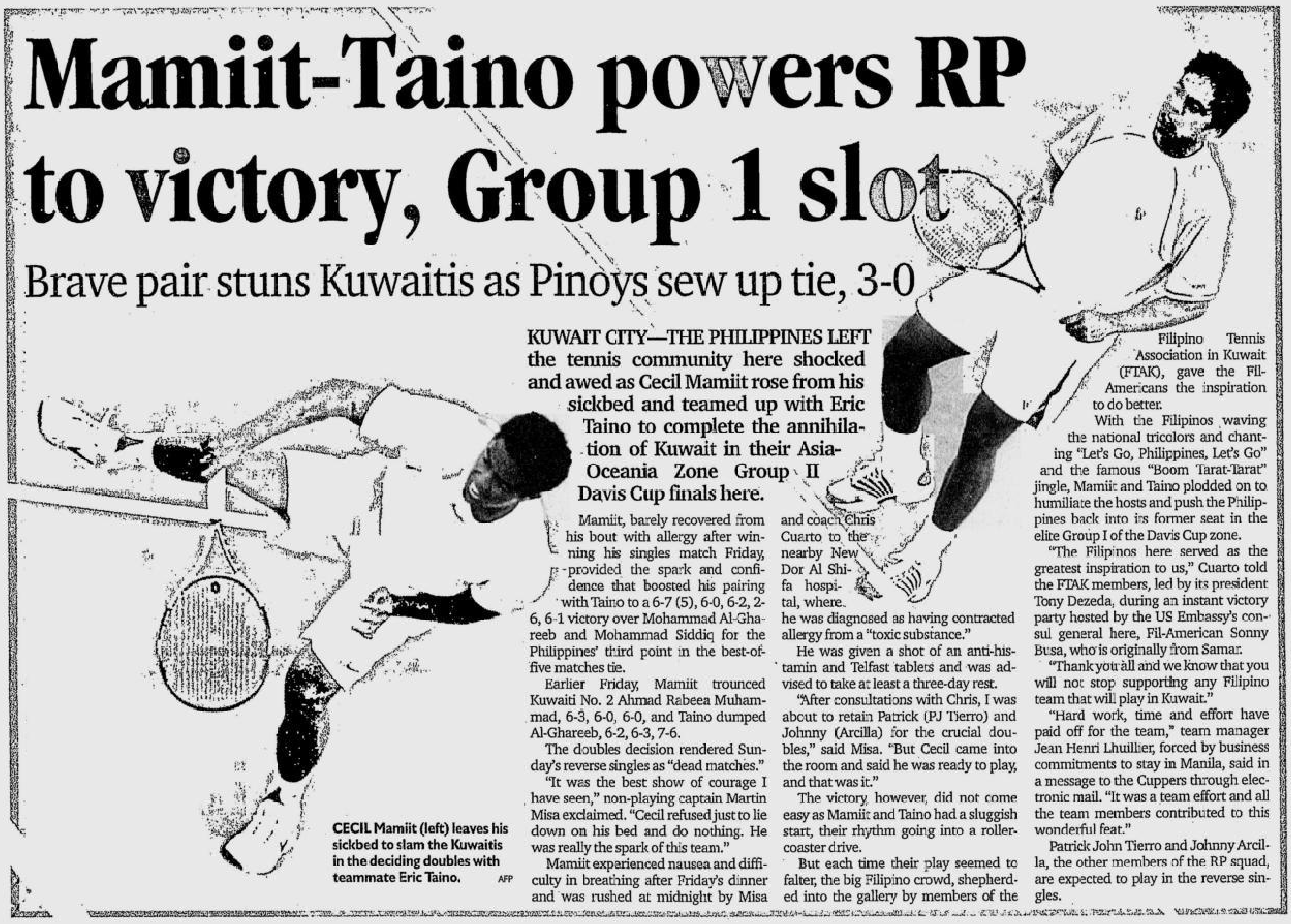
WHAT'S INSIDE

- Ateneo knocks out defending champion UST /A32
- Day of truce offers/A33

- US takes Davis lead /A34
- Easy does it for Ballester, Tolentino /A35

Mamiit-Taino powers RP to victory, Group 1 slot

Brave pair stuns Kuwaitis as Pinoys sew up tie, 3-0



CECIL Mamiit (left) leaves his sickbed to slam the Kuwaitis in the deciding doubles with teammate Eric Taino. AFP

KUWAIT CITY—THE PHILIPPINES LEFT the tennis community here shocked and awed as Cecil Mamiit rose from his sickbed and teamed up with Eric Taino to complete the annihilation of Kuwait in their Asia-Oceania Zone Group II Davis Cup finals here.

Mamiit, barely recovered from his bout with allergy after winning his singles match Friday, provided the spark and confidence that boosted his pairing with Taino to a 6-7 (5), 6-0, 6-2, 2-6, 6-1 victory over Mohammad Al-Ghareeb and Mohammad Siddiq for the Philippines' third point in the best-of-five matches tie.

Earlier Friday, Mamiit trounced Kuwaiti No. 2 Ahmad Rabeea Muhammad, 6-3, 6-0, 6-0, and Taino dumped Al-Ghareeb, 6-2, 6-3, 7-6.

The doubles decision rendered Sunday's reverse singles as "dead matches."

"It was the best show of courage I have seen," non-playing captain Martin Misa exclaimed. "Cecil refused just to lie down on his bed and do nothing. He was really the spark of this team."

Mamiit experienced nausea and difficulty in breathing after Friday's dinner and was rushed at midnight by Misa and coach Chris Cuarto to the nearby New Dor Al Shifa hospital, where he was diagnosed as having contracted allergy from a "toxic substance."

He was given a shot of an anti-histamin and Telfast tablets and was advised to take at least a three-day rest.

"After consultations with Chris, I was about to retain Patrick (PJ Tierro) and Johnny (Arcilla) for the crucial doubles," said Misa. "But Cecil came into the room and said he was ready to play, and that was it."

The victory, however, did not come easy as Mamiit and Taino had a sluggish start, their rhythm going into a roller-coaster drive.

But each time their play seemed to falter, the big Filipino crowd, shepherded into the gallery by members of the Filipino Tennis Association in Kuwait (FTAK), gave the Fil-Americans the inspiration to do better.

With the Filipinos waving the national tricolors and chanting "Let's Go, Philippines, Let's Go" and the famous "Boom Tarat-Tarat" jingle, Mamiit and Taino plodded on to humiliate the hosts and push the Philippines back into its former seat in the elite Group I of the Davis Cup zone.

"The Filipinos here served as the greatest inspiration to us," Cuarto told the FTAK members, led by its president Tony Dezeda, during an instant victory party hosted by the US Embassy's consul general here, Fil-American Sonny Busa, who is originally from Samar.

"Thank you all and we know that you will not stop supporting any Filipino team that will play in Kuwait."

"Hard work, time and effort have paid off for the team," team manager Jean Henri Lhuillier, forced by business commitments to stay in Manila, said in a message to the Cuppers through electronic mail. "It was a team effort and all the team members contributed to this wonderful feat."

Patrick John Tierro and Johnny Arcilla, the other members of the RP squad, are expected to play in the reverse singles.

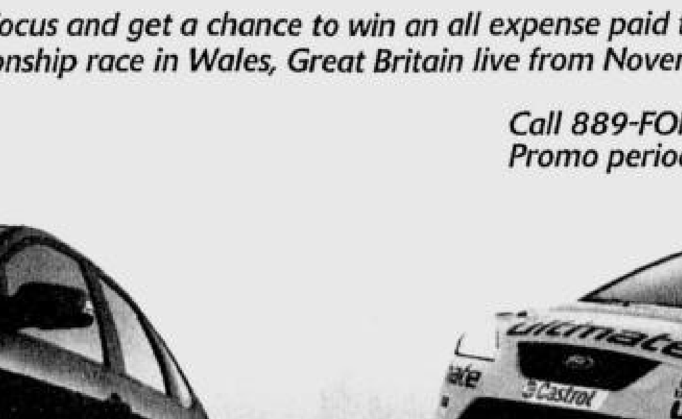
Trim Pacquiao arrives in LA

LOS ANGELES—MANNY PACQUIAO blew into town Saturday night (Sunday in Manila) for the final phase of his preparation for his return bout with Mexican icon Marco Antonio Barrera on Oct. 6 at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas.

Pacquiao arrived at the Los Angeles Airport with his Filipino trainer Buboy Fernandez after a tiring 10-hour flight from Manila.

The Filipino boxing hero looked fit and trim in a white outfit, according to a report in PhilBoxing.com.

"He looks good and ready to go," a pundit said on seeing Pacquiao, who completed 120 rounds of sparring against two Mexican and at least three Filipino fighters in Cebu City three days before leaving for the City of Angels.



MANNY Pacquiao (right) arrives at the Los Angeles Airport with his Filipino trainer Buboy Fernandez on Saturday, exactly two weeks before his return match with Marco Antonio Barrera in Las Vegas.

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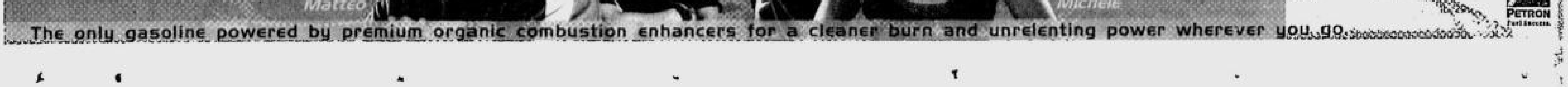

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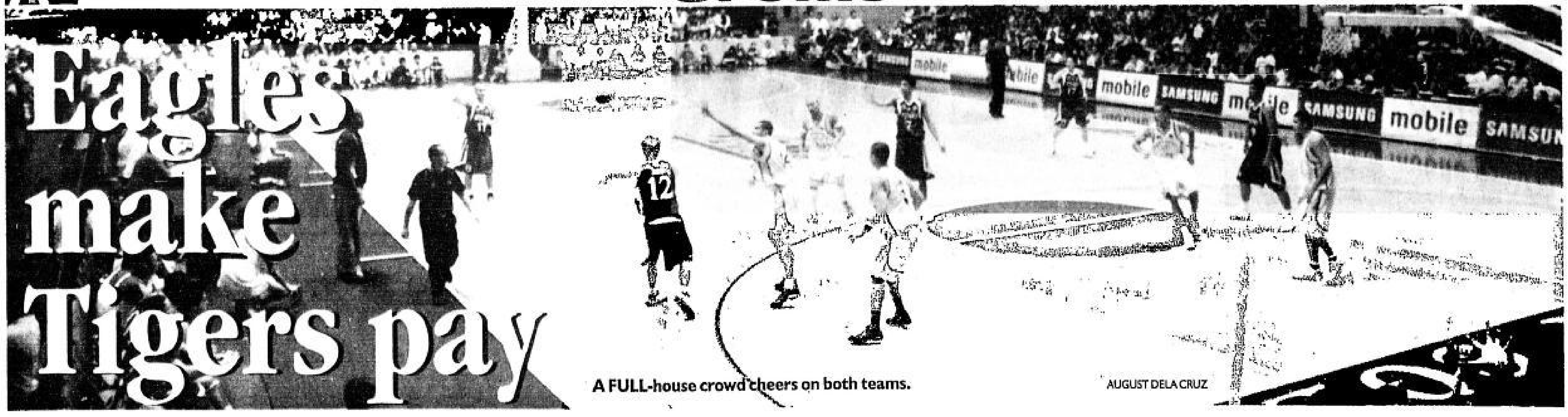
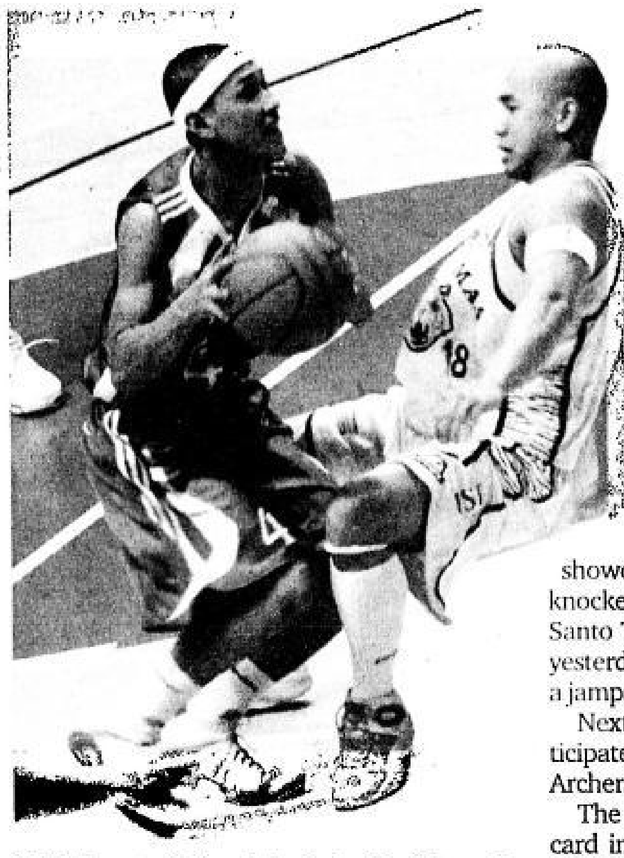
Eagles make Tigers pay



A FULL-house crowd cheers on both teams. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Ateneo knocks out defending champion UST



YURI Escueta (left) and the Eagles finally brought down Japs Cuan and the Tigers. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

GAME THURSDAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
3 p.m.—La Salle vs Ateneo

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE SQUAD THAT REduced them to tears last season ended up on the weeping—and whipping—end of things yesterday.

Ateneo went from wiping out a heartache to arranging a showdown a blood rival when it knocked the crown off the heads of the Santo Tomas Tigers via a 69-64 victory yesterday in a UAAP semifinal battle at a jampacked Araneta Coliseum.

Next up for the Eagles: A highly-anticipated duel against the La Salle Green Archers—and the odds.

The Archers carry a twice-to-beat card in the last level of the stepladder semifinals that will decide a worthy foe for the waiting and sweep-authoring University of the East Warriors.

"That was really our only focus, to get another shot at La Salle," said coach Norman Black after the Eagles set a fourth meeting this season with their traditional adversary.

Nonoy Baclao scored a layup and a put back, Eric Salamat completed a three-point play and Ford Arao buried a jumper for a crucial run that stretched a 56-53 lead to 65-54, early in the fourth quarter to pull away for good.

All UST could offer amid that offensive torrent was a paltry split from the stripe by Japs Cuan. The Tigers launched a last-gasp rally, one that fell short and reduced an erstwhile cocksure coach Pido Jarencio to tears at the buzzer.

"*Masakit* (It hurts)," said Jarencio. "*Lahat ng nangyari kasalanan ko, hindi kasalanan ng mga bata* (It's all my fault, it's not the boys' fault). I wasn't able to prepare my players to be tough. I wasn't able to prepare them in the final stretch."

It was a frank admission of culpability from a coach who, only days earlier said that the Tigers were built for playoff-type games and that the knockout match against Ateneo would boil down to a battle of toughness. And toughness was what the Tigers struggled to find.

Main man Jervy Cruz, the frontrunner in the Most Valuable Player race, typified the Tigers' struggles as the UST star nailed only one of 12 attempts in the second half.

The Eagles, on the other hand, knew what they needed and who they needed it from. And the guys' Black counted on to pull them through delivered big time.

Arao paced the Eagles by collecting 17 points, six rebounds and two assists, while Chris Tiu, who didn't start for the first time this season, came through with key baskets in their second-quarter comeback.

"We were able to bounce back from those two bad defeats (against National University and La Salle) last week," said Black. "Hats off to Chris Tiu and Ford Arao, who really stepped up and showed leadership particularly in the second half when we needed it."

The Tigers managed to bite a chunk out of the 11-point Eagles buffer and closed in at 67-62 in the last 49.8 seconds, but their rally fell short as Dylan Ababou's triple and Cruz's point-blank attempt missed in the dwindling seconds.

Baclao, a rookie big man, had a hand in the Tiger's failed comeback as he effectively manned the paint in the second half to finish with 11 markers, eight boards and three blocks.

The scores

ATENEO 69—Arao 17, Tiu 14, Baclao 11, Baldos 7, Salamat 6, Al-Hussaini 5, Long 4, Escueta 3, Reyes 2, Nkemakolam, 0, Laterre 0, Barracoso 0.

UST 64—Cruz 17, Ababou 16, Canlas 14, Espiritu 5, Allera 5, Mirza 3, Dizon 2, Cuan 2, Taylor 0, Cortez 0.

Quarters: 10-18, 32-30, 55-51, 69-64

Typhoon Pacquiao back with renewed fury

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—HE LOOKED PERfectly fine, ready to rumble. But it did not come as a surprise when Manny Pacquiao, who slept practically through the entire Manila-LAX flight yesterday, announced he would take to the road Sunday.

There were no scheduled workouts today, and Wild Card people said Pacquiao would not be coming to the famous gym until Monday here for the remaining push in his preparations against Marco Antonio Barrera.

But although he had been described as already in peak form, Pacquiao obviously does not want to risk losing a bit of his competitive edge.

* * *

Pacquiao arrived here on schedule wearing a light, long-sleeved shirt, jeans, black shoes and familiar jewelry—and his now-famous goatee.

He was joined in the trip by trainer Freddie Roach, deputy trainer Buboy Fernandez, chief aide Jake Joson, and the two Mexicans who helped Pacquiao in his Cebu workouts.

Roach had himself made the assurance that Pacquiao, who has completed a total of 111 rounds of sparring, is a hundred percent ready.

But the Filipino warrior must've been fully aware of the killer regimen Barrera has been undergoing in a secluded workplace in Guadalajara.

* * *

Pacquiao motored straight to his Palazzo apartment on the classy side of La Brea, where he was received in merriment by his entire staff, with whom he shared a dinner of chicken adobo (no pork), rice and soup.

He was still up shortly before midnight and staffer Alex Oreto said it should only be a limbering run for his generous boss today in a nearby park, no longer around the hilly, trying Griffith terrain.

* * *

If there had been misgivings on the wisdom of Pacquiao's decision to pitch camp in Cebu for the core of his training against Barrera, these were all dashed after he emerged visibly more vigorous from the experimental stint.

Pacquiao, said Buboy Fernandez, was only at 133 lbs., three over the super featherweight limit, when they boarded in Manila.

Pacquiao's lovely wife, Jinkee, saw the great warrior off, and was expected to follow shortly.

* * *

After another week at Wild Card, Pacquiao is scheduled to motor to Las Vegas after hearing mass here on Sunday.

There were actually shallow suggestions the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, where the Oct. 6 showdown will be staged, could be propitious for Pacquiao.

All for the simple fact that Barrera has lost two previous fight in the same venue.

But Barrera, swearing these hints were all silly, did not hide the fury he has harnessed since he suffered his first knockout defeat against Pacquiao four years ago.

Barrera has repeatedly called Pacquiao an ugly thorn on his side.

* * *

It was drizzly here the whole day yesterday and there were gusts of wind. But conditions were already mild and dry when Pacquiao planed in.

On Friday, the Associated Press said intensity was "highly uncertain" regarding the hurricane that hovered over the Mexican peninsula, not too far from here.

The LA Times on Saturday said an "unseasonably cold storm hovers offshore" that could unleash showers across the Southland, which includes this capital.

There was uncertain weather, the forecasters maintained.

Well, this may sound corny mainly to Mexican fight fans.

But the typhoon from the Pacific, as the eminent Larry Merchant had described Pacquiao, that quietly blew into town yesterday has not dissipated a bit.

Pacquiao has refused to sound out a warning.

But, quiet as his return has been, the Pacman is back with renewed fury.

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Montilla stars as greenhorn UCN Dragons destroy Doves

LEAGUE NEWCOMer Universal College of Nursing turned to Mac Montilla in the endgame to score its first victory in the sixth Universities and Colleges Athletic Association (UCAA) men's basketball tournament at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Sports Complex.

Montilla scored 14 points, including the winning jumper with 12 seconds left that gave the Dragons a 77-72 overtime victory over the heavily favored St. Francis of Assisi College Doves.

STANDINGS	W	L
ACSAT	9	3
EAC	8	4
St. Francis	8	4
PSBA	7	5
Las Piñas	7	5
DLSU-D	4	8
Olivarez	3	9
UCN	1	11.

GAMES MONDAY
(*EAC Sports Complex*)
10 a.m.—EAC vs La Salle-Dasmariñas
11:30 a.m.—St. Francis vs PSBA
1 p.m.—Las Piñas College vs Acsat
2:30 p.m.—UCN vs Olivarez College

Montilla's heroics ended the Dragons' losing skein at 11. His jumpshot finally put UCN ahead to stay, 75-72. Lester Reyes capped the Dragons' win with two free throws with four seconds left.

The loss kept the Doves from joining the Asian College of Science and Technology Lightnings at the top and allowed the defending champion Emilio Aguinaldo College Generals to gain a share of second with St. Francis.

Jeff Ompad led the Dragons with 21 points with Reyes scoring 14 points.

The La Salle-Dasmariñas Patriots, behind a drive by Angel Salado with 28 ticks left, prevailed over the Lightnings, 76-74.

The Lightnings will try to secure the top Final Four semifinal seat today when they battle the Las Pinas College Blue Lions at 1 p.m. at the EAC Sports Complex.

SPORTSWATCH

3 UAAP coaches in Forum

COACHES OF THE THREE TEAMS FIGHTING IT out for the 70th UAAP men's basketball championship, including Dindo Pumaren of early finalist University of the East, will be the main guests of this week's session of the PSA Forum at the Shakey's United Nations Ave. branch.

Joining Pumaren in the public sports program aired live over dzSR Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Shakey's and Pagcor are UE assistant coach Bong Ravena, La Salle mentor Franz Pumaren and Ateneo's Norman Black.

Also appearing in the 10:30 a.m. session are the people behind the Mosman Cup football led by Jena Fetalino, tournament managers Ding Generoso and Matt Freeston, project head Sandra Camesa and Jane Walker, president of Philippine Christian Foundation.

Screening for Roligon stagfest

TO ACCOMODATE MORE ENTRIES FOR ITS upcoming 4-stag derby on Oct. 4, the Roligon Mega Cockpit management will hold new screening and leg banding of stags eight to 10 months old.

Host Rolly Ligon has designated breeder Moling Dorado as screening committee head.

The one-day derby offers P500,000 in guaranteed prize for an entry fee of P8,800. The fastest win champion will receive P50,000.

LGBA finals at Araneta today

THE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND OF LUZON Gamecock Breeders Association 7-Stag Derby series comes off the wraps at 12 noon today at the Araneta Coliseum with some 90 matches.

Of the 189 participants who joined the first leg of the derby, supported by B-Meg Derby Ace, 25 remained unbeaten with three wins each, six have 2.5 points and 49 tallied 2 each.

"We expect a banner crowd today since this is the first stag derby at Araneta Coliseum for 2007," said LGBA president Rene "Boy" Diaz.

The second batch of finalists will see action on Wednesday at San Juan Coliseum.

Day of truce offers

Antonio, Laylo stay in touch with chess leaders

Standings after five rounds:

4 points—Z. Pengxiang (China), G. Gopal (India), S. Megaranto (Indonesia); 3.5—**R. Antonio (RP), D. Laylo (RP)**, Z. Jun (China)*, Z. Jianchao (China), W. Hao (China), E. Hossain (Bangladesh), D. Neelotpal (India), N. Parimarjan (India), C. Deepan (India); 3.0—**E. Torre (RP), M. Paragua (RP), W. So (RP)**, E. Maghami (Iran), U. Adianto (Indonesia), Y. Shaoteng (China), L. Chao (China), L. Shilong (China), S. Yang (China), D.T. Hai (Vietnam), C. Sandipan (India), T. H. Thong (Vietnam), A. Kim (Korea); 2.5—**R. Legaspi (RP)**, M.Mahjobbzrdast (Iran), W. Yan g(China), G. Rohit (India), E. Moradiabadi (Iran), Q. Liem (Vietnam); 2.0—**R. Bancod (RP)**, N.A. Dung (Vietnam), M. Ardeshi (Iran). (*— *one unfinished match*)

ANTONIO

LAYLO

By Roy Luarca

MANDAUE CITY—TRUE TO THEIR CALLing as Armymen, Grandmaster Rogelio "Joey" Antonio and International Master Darwin Laylo continued to carry the fight for the Philippines in the 6th Asian Individual Chess Championship at the Cebu International Convention Center here.

Antonio and Laylo settled for draws Sunday night to raise their totals to 3.5 points in the company of their opponents and Chinese GMs Zhang Pengxiang and Zhou Jianchao, who also agreed to split the point in the fifth round of the tournament serving as a qualifier for the chess World Cup slated November in Kanty-Mansyk, Russia.

Handling black and unable to find a winning line, Antonio accepted Bangladeshi IM Enamul Hossain's draw offer after just 12 moves of a Caro Kann.

The 27 year-old Laylo, back after serving a six-month suspension slapped by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, also played accurately with black and forced Chinese GM Zhou Jianchao to a draw via repetition in 23 moves of an English opening.

"Okay *lang*, there's no winning line," said Laylo, who is bidding to gain his third and final GM result in the 11-round tournament.

Solo leader GM Susanto Megaranto of Indonesia, who totes a perfect 4.0 points, and Chinese GM Zhao Jun (3.5) are still locked in a tight battle on the top board at presstime.

Zhang, winner of the First President GMA Cup in Parañaque last November, is ranked No. 2 with an Elo rating of 2649 against the No. 3 Zhao's 2626.

Joining the 3.5 pointers were Indian GMs Chakkravarthy Deepan and Das Neelotpal, who disposed of Vietnamese GM Le Quang Liem and Iranian GM Elshan Moradiabadi.

Having an unclear position with the black pieces, GM Mark Paragua immediately accepted GM Ehsan Ghaemmaghami's truce offering after 20 moves of a Sicilian to climb to 3.0 points, in the company of the fourth-seeded Iranian who boasts an Elo of 2610 and countrymen GM Eugene Torre and IM Wesley So.

The 54-year-old Torre was threatening mate when Jordanian Fide Master Sami Khader resigned after 56 moves of a Dutch opening, while the 13-year-old So persevered to force a draw with Indian GM Chanda Sandipan after 55 moves of a Sicilian.

Though So was two pawns down, the World Under 16 board 1 gold medalist, marshalled his more active pieces to fend off Sandipan.

China's Yu Shaoteng and Indonesia's Utut Adianto agreed to a grandmaster draw and were also at 3.0 points.

Asian Indoor Games-bound IM Ronald Bancod beat countryman Anthony Makinako to post his second straight win after dropping his first three games.

In a battle of cellar-dwellers, NM Mirabeau Maga finally snapped a four-game losing spell by trouncing Taiwanese Yueh Wei Poe.

The top 10 placers of the 11-round tournament will advance to World Cup in November.

Milo tops Milo netfest

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—LENELYN Milo eked out a 4-6, 6-2, 10-5 finals victory over Lynette Palasan in the recent Mindanao regional qualifier of the 2007 Milo Junior Tennis Cup at the Golden Village hardcourts here.

The win boosted Milo's bid of landing a berth in the RP-Milo squad that will see action in the Malaysian junior tennis circuit. She also booked a spot in the national finals of the Milo tournament's 12-and-under division for girls.

Christian Lopez tripped Spencer Sagrado, 6-3, 6-7, 10-6, in the unisex 10-under and likewise advanced to the national finals together with Bryan Kent Balbanida (boys' 12-under), Bernan Lou Bering (boys' 14-under), and Nina Jessa Marie Ladera (girls' 14-under). Balbanida routed Elvie Lopez, 6-2, 6-1; Bering blasted Robert Ortellano, 6-3, 6-1; and Ladera nipped Ayn Magracia, 6-0, 6-4.

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WNCAA REMATCH

Lyceum, St. Benilde cagebelles forge title duel

DEFENDING CHAMPION Lyceum of the Philippines and College of St. Benilde overwhelmed their respective semifinal foes Saturday to forge a rematch of last year's title duel in the 38th WNCAA senior basketball tournament at the St. Scholastica's College gym.

The Lady Pirates crushed the World Citi Colleges Vikings, 83-50, and the Lady Blazers followed suit by overwhelming the St. Scholastica Scions, 90-64.

Game One of the best-of-three series for the Senior A title is set tentatively on Oct. 7.

April Dianne Lualhati topscored with 24 points as she reprised her role of chief thorn on the side of the Vikings. Lualhati powered the Lady Pirates to a 69-36 victory over the Vikings in their first encounter last Sept. 9.

Leonette Salvacion, on the other hand, made herself a target for the Lady Pirates' defense in the finals as she topscored with 30 points for the Lady Blazers.

In the final playing day of the Senior B elimination round, Rizal Technological University completed a six-game sweep with a 58-41 victory over La Consolacion College Manila. Cariza Joanna Valdez led the winners with 19 points.

Emilio Aguinaldo College finished third after nipping University of Asia and the Pacific, 58-55.

RTU will have the twice-to-beat edge in the semifinals next Sunday against fourth-ranked Philippine Women's University. St. Francis of Assisi College will have the same bonus over EAC after ending the eliminations in second at 5-1.

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2. The PEZA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the following GOODS which shall be awarded on a per lot basis:

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The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a single similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC and at least five (5) years experience in the manufacture and/or supply of the proposed product and is able to supply, install configure the proposed products and provide after sales support.

5. In addition, bidders must have filed their latest annual income and business tax returns (VAT and/or Percentage Taxes covering six (6) months immediately prior to the submission of bids) via the Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS) of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be inspected and/or purchased by interested Bidders from 24 September – 01 October 2007, Mondays to Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand Pesos Only (P2,000.00) and submission of a certified copy of their Phil-GEPs Registration Certificate. The method of payment will be cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

7. The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 04 October 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, PEZA Building, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.

8. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 11:00 a.m. of 18 October 2007. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than *1% of the ABC*. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

9. Bid opening shall be on 18 October 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, PEZA Bldg., Roxas Blvd., corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

10. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.

11. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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(PDI - Sept. 24, 2007)

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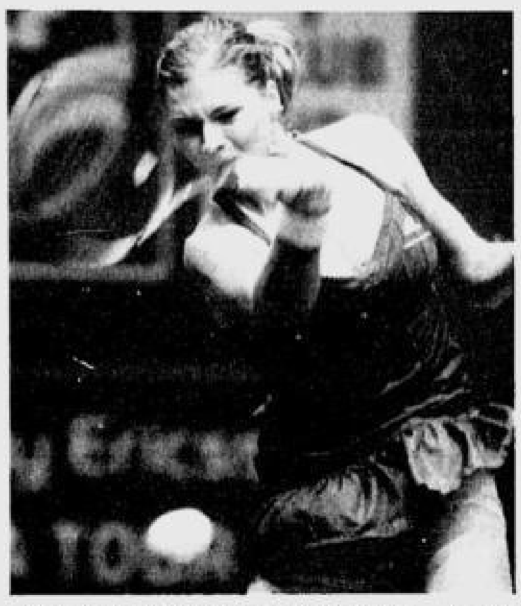
Kirilenko dumps Hantuchova, gains final


KIRILENKO: First over Hantuchova REUTERS

CALCUTTA, INDIA—FOURTH-SEEDED Russian Maria Kirilenko defeated second-seeded Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia, 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, Saturday to enter the Sunfeast Open final.

Posting her first win against Hantuchova in four encounters, Kirilenko set up Sunday's title contest against first-time finalist Mariya Koryttseva of Ukraine, a 7-6 (3), 6-3 winner against Anne Keothavong of Britain in the semifinal.

"I'm really exited, it's an amazing feeling to enter the singles final," said Koryttseva, who has earlier featured in two doubles title wins.

"I committed a lot of mistakes in the first set, that happens when you play under pressure," Koryttseva said.

KORYTTSEVA AFP

Kirilenko, seeking her third WTA Tour title, produced a dramatic turnaround after losing the opening set that went to Hantuchova after Kirilenko dropped service in the ninth game.

Kirilenko effected three service breaks—in the second, fourth and eighth games of the second set—to draw level and take the contest into the decider third set that she won with ease.

Hantuchova's only point in the final set came in the fourth game. She struggled with her service and was broken in the second and sixth games.

Koryttseva needed medical attention midway through her contest against Keothavong in a semifinal where both players were seeking their maiden entry into the title round.

Both players were erratic with their service in the first set that featured six breaks and was decided by a tiebreaker.

Koryttseva broke the British No. 1 in the first, fifth and 11th games, but Keothavong kept her hopes alive by breaking back in the second, eighth and 12th games.

In the tiebreaker, Koryttseva trailed 2-3 before claiming four successive points that clinched her the set.

In the second set, Koryttseva took a medical time-out due to a strained thigh before securing her place in the final by forcing two service breaks. *AP*

US takes Davis lead

LONDON—THE UNITED STATES AND Germany each won their doubles matches Saturday to move within one point of reaching the Davis Cup final.

Top-ranked doubles team Bob and Mike Bryan gave the United States a 2-1 lead at Sweden by beating Simon Aspelin and Jonas Bjorkman, 7-6 (11), 6-2, 6-3, and Germany went ahead 2-1 at defending champion Russia when Alexander Waske and Philipp Petzschner defeated Dmitry Tursunov and Mikhail Youzhny, 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5).

In the World Group playoffs, Roger Federer and Yves Allegro wasted a match point in the third set and eventually lost to Tomas Berdych and Radek Stepanek, 3-6, 5-7, 7-6 (7), 6-4, 6-4, to hand the Czech Republic a 2-1 lead over Switzerland.

Tim Henman teamed with Jamie Murray to send Britain into the World Group with an insurmountable 3-0 lead over Croatia at Wimbledon.

In Belgrade, Novak Djokovic helped Serbia take a 2-1 lead over 28-time Davis Cup champion Australia by joining with Nenad Zimonjic to beat Lleyton Hewitt and Paul Hanley, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2.

SERBIA'S Novak Djokovic celebrates after teaming up with Nenad Zimonjic (not seen) to defeat the Australian pair of Lleyton Hewitt and Paul Hanley in their Davis Cup tie. REUTERS

The Bryan twins, who are 12-1 in Davis Cup doubles for the United States, saved three set points in the tiebreaker on Scandinavium arena's fast indoor carpet.

Aspelin then netted a forehand volley off Mike Bryan's excellent service return on the Americans' fourth set point.

"The first set could have gone either way. It actually lifted our game and we started playing better and better," Bob Bryan said.

The American pair broke Bjorkman's serve twice to win the second set. *AP*

Sox clinch playoff slot ahead of everyone

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA—Jason Varitek and Julio Lugo each homered in the ninth inning to erase a one-run deficit as Boston beat Tampa Bay, 8-6, to become the first team to clinch a playoff berth.

JD Drew also homered and drove in three runs for Boston (92-63), which kept its advantage over the New York Yankees (89-65) in the American League East at 2 1/2 games with the win.

With the Detroit Tigers (84-71) suffering a loss to the Kansas City Royals on Saturday, the Red Sox clinched at least the wild card, assuring the team of making the Major League Baseball playoffs for the fourth time in five years.

"Oh man, like you can't believe," Red Sox manager Terry Francona said when asked how satisfying this win was. "It was about as roller-coaster as it gets. I talked the other day about depending on people and I mentioned Varitek's name. That's how you win with guys like that."

The Devil Rays held a 6-5 lead going into the ninth inning before handing the ball to closer Al Reyes (2-4).

The righthander allowed a leadoff solo blast to Varitek to tie the game at 6-6. *AFP*

ADEBAYOR AFP

Adebayor spikes Arsenal victory

LONDON—EMmanuel Adebayor scored a hat trick Saturday to lead Arsenal to a 5-0 win over Derby that kept the Gunners on top of the Premier League.

Abou Diaby and Adebayor scored in the first half at Emirates Stadium, before Adebayor completed his hat trick with efforts either side of a goal by prolific midfielder Cesc Fabregas.

Arsenal moved to 16 points, four more than Liverpool, which missed the chance to put more pressure on the Gunners when it drew 0-0 against visiting Birmingham.

"The team means business," Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said. "They are not there to be showoffs. They want to achieve something together." *AP*

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 2007-019-g

BIDDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF PHOTOCOPYING
SERVICE FOR TWO (2) YEARS

The **Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth)**, through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2006 and continuing appropriation of 2007, intends to apply the sum of **PhP 7,275,297.96** as the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of Photocopying Service for Two (2) Years. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PhilHealth now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the said procurement with the following specifications:

Quantity	Type	Description
11 units	High-end Digital Equipment	A machine that is capable of handling monthly volume of 50,001 copies and above and with a **copy speed of 55 copies per minute (cpm) or higher**
16 units	Medium-end Digital Equipment	A machine that is capable of handling monthly volume of 20,001 to 50,000 copies and with a **copy speed of 40 cpm or higher**
26 units	Low-end Digital Equipment	A machine that is capable of handling a monthly volume of 20,000 copies and with a copy **speed of 30 cpm or higher**

- The total number of photocopying machines should be as stated above, subject to appropriate upgrading/increase in the number of equipment in case of increase in the photocopying requirements of the office.
- All units should be digital with scan once, print many features.
- All units should be capable of handling ordinary A4 to A3 size plain paper.
- All units should have a power supply requirement of 220 volts.
- All units should have a manual/digital metering feature.
- All units should have an enlarger/reducer feature.
- Medium-end and High-end units should have an automatic document feeder and back-to-back feature with sorter/finisher.
- Low-end units should have an automatic document feeder and a back-to-back feature.
- All units should have security locks and password operation.

Other goods and services requirements that the winning bidder shall provide PhilHealth, **free of charge:**

- Upgrading of machines, when necessary;
- Maintenance and repair services, inclusive of spare parts;
- Consumables like toner, developer, drum, inclusive of the necessary replacement thereof to ensure the normal operation of the machine;
- Back-up unit to be located in the Central Office and NCR-Group Branch Offices of PhilHealth, in the event that any of the installed machine/s in the said location breaks down;
- Replacement of defective units within 24 hours in case any unit becomes unserviceable;
- One (1) stand-by technician to attend to service call within the Central Office and NCR-Group Branch Offices of PhilHealth. (Free in-house technician);
- Additional units needed under the same terms and conditions as stipulated in the contract, including cost per copy;
- No guarantee deposit will be required by the supplier upon delivery and installation of machines;
- All costs for the installation and delivery of the machine shall be on account of the winning bidder;
- No minimum copy volume;
- Two percent (2%) spoilage to be deducted from the gross copies;
- Free operator's training to the end-users; and
- No automatic shutdown of the machines once Maximum Usage Quantity (MUQ) is achieved. The MUQ shall be set by the specific end-user upon deployment of the corresponding unit.

All Goods, Delivery Receipts/Invoices shall be delivered to the PhilHealth Central Office, Supply Section, Rm. 1503, 15th floor, CityState Centre, Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City, provided that the photocopying machines shall be respectively deployed by the winning bidder at any part of the office premises of PhilHealth as determined by PhilHealth and at the expense of the winning bidder.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Sole Proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws of regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino Citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to the technical and financial requirements. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who would be determined as such after the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the **Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees (OSBAC)** in the Central Office of PhilHealth, Room 1107 11th floor CityState Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City, and inspect the Bidding Documents from **8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

A complete set of Bidding Documents should be purchased by interested Bidders from **September 24 to October 2, 2007** at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **PhP 5,000.00** cash. The prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.

PhilHealth will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **October 3, 2007 at 10:30 a.m.** at the **OSBAC Conference Room** (Rm. 1106), PhilHealth Central Office, 11th floor CityState Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the **OSBAC Conference Room** on or before **October 17, 2007, 10:30 a.m.** The official time shall be based on the wall clock located at the **OSBAC Conference Room**. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on October 17, 2007, 10:30 a.m. at the **OSBAC Conference Room.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

CY 2005 to CY 2006 is the relevant period for contracts which will be required by PhilHealth to be submitted.

PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees in the Central Office
MR. JOSEPH O. VERGARA
Rm. 1107, 11th Floor CityState Centre
709 Shaw Blvd, Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City
Tel. (02) 637-9999 locals 1128 and 1130
e-mail add: osbac@philhealth.gov.ph
Facsimile No. 637-4735
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(Sgd.) Atty. VALENTIN C. GUANIO
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(PDI - Sept. 24, 2007)

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24 September 2007

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

Manila North Tollways Corporation (MNTC), through its Pre-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC), invites interested international and local contractors to apply for pre-qualification and, if found qualified, to bid for the following:

The Project : Construction of Manila North Tollways Project – Phase 2 (Segment 8.1) C-5 Northern Link Expressway Project (Mindanao Avenue Extension to NLEX)
Brief Description of the Works : The construction of approximately 2.7km of 2x2 dual carriageway asphal tconcrete roads, full cloverleaf interchange, overpasses, service roads, toll platforms, opera tions and maintenance facilities, installation of Fixed Operating Equipment (FOE) Systems (consisting of toll collection, traffic management and telecommunication equipment), supplied by MNTC, and associated ancillary works.
Project Duration : 365 calendar days

To be qualified to bid for this Project, a contractor shall submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) and properly accomplished Prequalification Documents (PDs), and meet the following major criteria which include, among others: (a) partnership/corporation/joint venture with a valid Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) license/special license with principal classification and category of general engineering "AAA" and with project range classification of Large B for roads, highways, pavement, railways, airport horizontal structure and bridges, (b) completion of similar project valued at least Php 1.0 billion during the last 5 years, and (c) Net Financial Contracting Capacity of at least Php 1.5 billion, with a credit line commitment/cash deposit certificate valued at least Php 100 million as of the date of submission of the PDs.

The deadlines for the relevant activities are as shown below:

1. Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI)	From	: 8:00am of 25 September 2007
	To	: 5:00pm of 03 October 2007
2. Issuance of Prequalification Documents (PDs)	From	: 8:00am of 01 October 2007
	To	: 5:00pm of 08 October 2007
3. Pre-submittal Meeting	09 October 2007 (time and venue to be advised)	
4. Request for Clarifications	Deadline	: 5:00pm of 11 October 2007
5. MNTC's Issuance of Addenda, if necessary	Deadline	: 5:00pm of 16 October 2007
6. Submission of Accomplished PDs	Deadline	: 5:00pm of 24 October 2007
7. Issuance of Bid Documents (BDs)	Date to be advised	
8. Pre-Bid Conference	Within 1 week after the issuance of BDs	
9. Submission of Bids	Date of submission to be determined but no later than 60 days from the date of pre-bid conference	

The PDs may be obtained from MNTC's office at the address noted above. The MNTC PBAC will issue hard copies of the PDs upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00).

The MNTC PBAC will issue hard copies of the BDs at the same address to qualified bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php 50,000.00).

MNTC reserves the right to accept or reject any LOI, PDs and bid, without giving any reasons, to waive any required formality or technical deficiencies, and to terminate the bidding process at anytime before contract award, without incurring any liability to the affected parties.

For inquiries on this invitation, you may contact Mr. Renato R. Martinez or Mr. Nemesio G. Castillo at telephone numbers 02-6384380/02-6388922.

APPROVED:

(SGD.) **ANGEL S. ONG**
MNTC PBAC Chairman

(PDI--Sept. 24, 2007)

Easy does it for Ballester, Tolentino

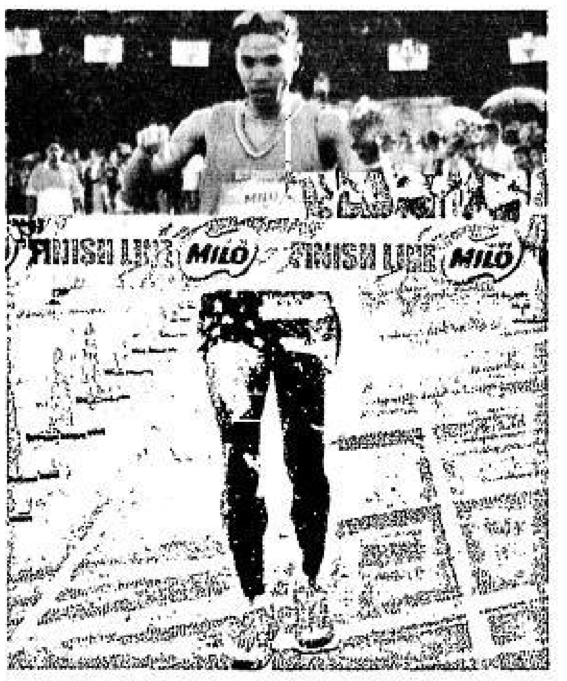
SAN PABLO CITY—VETERANS ALLAN Ballester and Ailene Tolentino topped the 21-kilometer qualifying race of the 31st Milo Marathon with a flourish here yesterday and sounded out their serious bids for the national finals in November.

Ballester, back-to-back national champion from 2000 and a gold medalist in the Southeast Asian Games, dominated the men's race with a time of one hour, 15 minutes and six seconds.

Tolentino's triumph was more tactical. She shadowed the early leader in the first half of the race before seizing the front to stay and winning in 1:45.27.

Ballester, of Los Baños, Laguna, and Tolentino of La Salle-Dasmariñas towed the second and third placers in their respective divisions into the grand finals set Nov. 18 in Metro Manila.

The 33-year-old Ballester was virtually unchallenged, winning the men's race by more than a minute over runner-up Alquin Bolivar and Vicente Canillo, who clocked 1:16:57 and 1:19:08, respectively.



SOUTHEAST Asian Games gold medalist and two-time Milo Marathon winner Allan Ballester hits the tape to top yesterday's San Pablo City qualifier. The 33-year-old marvel is a doubtful starter in the 42K national finals, though, as he is part of the RP team training for the Thailand SEA Games in December.

"*Talagang gusto kong manalo ulit sa* national finals, *kaya ko pa naman eh* (I'm dead-set on winning the national finals, I can still hack it)," said Ballester.

Standing between Ballester and a third Milo Marathon victory, though, is his impending stint in the Southeast Asian Games in Thailand in December.

Ballester said he would join the shorter 10K race in the grand finals if he makes the team to the SEAG.

In last year's 42K national finals in Metro Manila, Ballester grabbed the early lead but suffered leg cramps in the last three kilometers and settled for fourth place.

The marathon is held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Adidas and the Department of Tourism.

Tolentino, who vied in an inter-school track and field meet on Saturday, allowed teammate Corazon Salcedo to take the early lead before catching up with her at the 9-km mark.

The 20-year-old Tolentino pulled away for good at the scenic Sampaloc Lake, 4 km to the finish. Salcedo settled for second in 1:46:44 and Cecile Silverio wound up third in 2:06:58.

Having topped last year' 42K Metro Manila eliminations, Tolentino was tagged as the favorite to win the national title in December. She wound up fourth, though, due to overconfidence and lack of training.

"*Paghahandaan ko na talaga ito* (I will prepare hard for this)," said Tolentino, who hails from Cagayan de Oro City, where the next qualifying race will be held on Sept. 30.

Mark Jake Reyes ruled the men's 5K side event with Ranya Bumpas topping the ladies race. The winners in the 3K age-group race for kids were Eddie Boy Ucag and Rebecca Reyes in the 6-9 class and Christopher Reyes and Malca Mae Tacsiat in the 10-12 age category.

Powell misses world record in gold-winning 100m run

STUTTGART, GERMANY—Asafa Powell ran the third fastest 100 meters of the year, and it came after two false starts and battling a headwind.

Running into a 0.3 meter per second headwind Saturday, the Jamaican got to within .09 seconds of his world record, winning the 100 at the World Athletics final in 9.83 seconds.

In the absence of world champion Tyson Gay, Powell stayed calm as false starts frazzled the opposition. And once out of the blocks, he ran relaxed and blew away his opponents.

Pedro's Cup
POWELL

POWELL: Against the wind AP

"One of the best," Powell said. "Considering the two false starts, and I saw the wind was minus.

"I'm very happy and impressed to run this great time," Powell added.

In 2001, Maurice Greene ran 9.82 seconds, but it was only into a 0.2 headwind.

Jaysuma Saidy Ndure of Norway was second behind Powell in 10.06, and Michael Frater of Jamaica was third in 10.11.

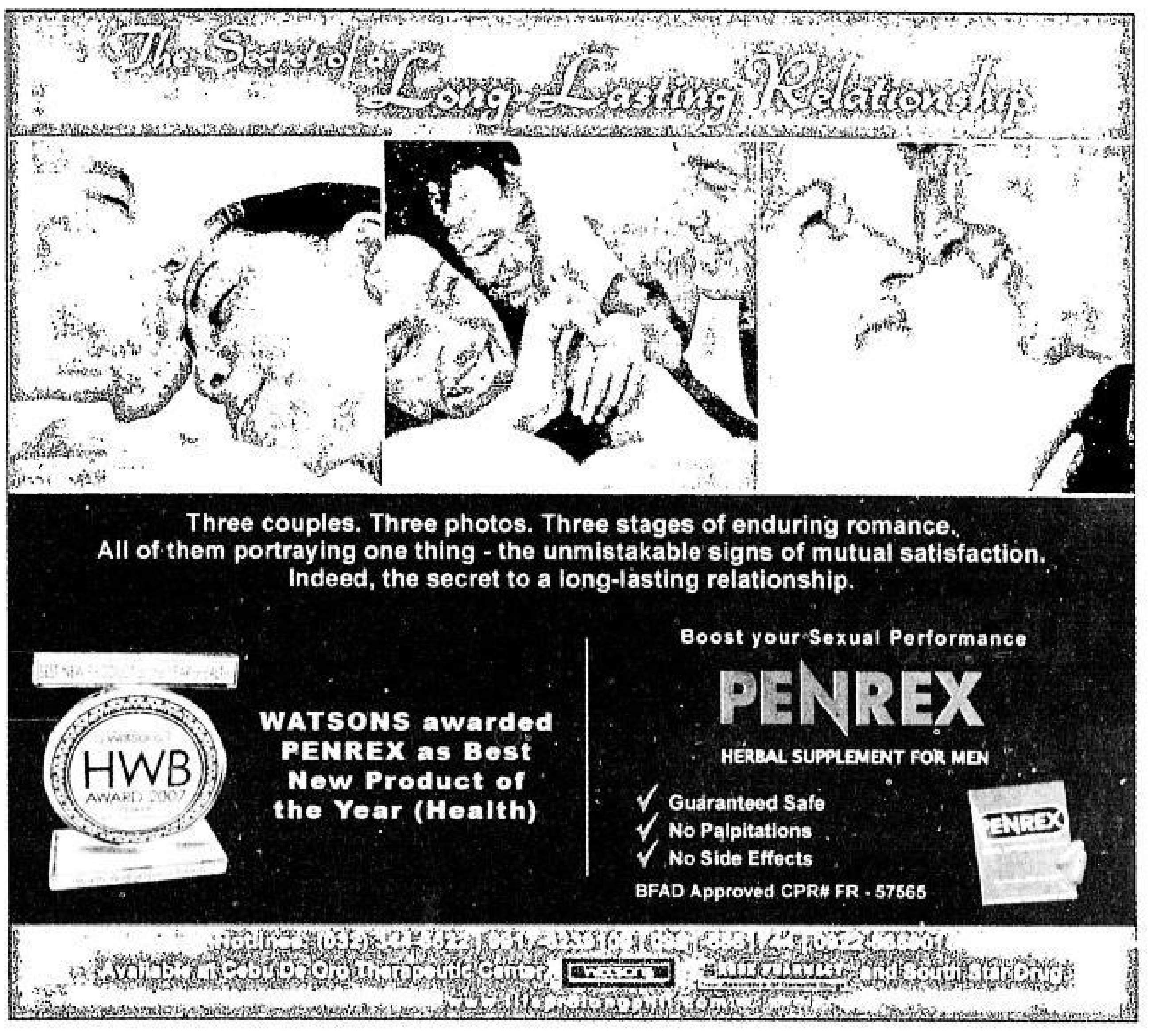
Olusoji Fasuba of Nigeria was disqualified for a second false start on an afternoon when the starting gun caused major problems in all sprint races.

Hopes were raised for a world record on Saturday, but Powell, world pole vault champion Yelena Isinbayeva and high jumper Blanka Vlasic all failed.

If Isinbayeva was eyeing to go higher than ever at first, she was happy to come away with a victory in the end.

Isinbayeva and Monika Pyrek of Poland were tied for first after clearing 4.82 meters. Both then missed three times at a higher height, and could not be divided on a countback, so it went to a jumpoff. The Russian, always at her best under pressure, cleared 4.87 on her first attempt. Pyrek who already set a personal best to get into the jumpoff, failed. Svetlana Feofanova was third with 4.82.

Vlasic won her 17th of 18 competitions this year and again, no one came close. The world champion was the only one to clear 2 meters but failed three times at 2.05, still 4 centimeters under the world record height. AP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SPORTS

SMC SCOTCH DOUBLES

Valle-Millares takes it

VALLE: Fine form

GANDY VALLE AND Jay Jay Millares were both excellent and lucky late Friday as the two billiards warriors claimed the inaugural San Miguel Corp. Scotch Doubles 10-ball crown over Carlo Biado and Mark Mendoza with a 13-10 victory in the finals at Metrowalk in Pasig City.

With Valle putting up a superb performance, his pairing with Millares claimed the P140,000 top prize.

Biado and Mendoza settled for the P80,000 second prize.

"We are proud to win the very first SMC Scotch Doubles 10-ball title," said a delighted Valle, of Davao City and a member of the star-studded Bugsy Promotion stable.

Millares plays out of Escoda Billiard Hall in Manila.

"In the beginning of the match, there was a lot of pressure on us, but when we went three games ahead it all lifted," said Valle, the 1998 Bangkok Asian Games gold medallist and SMB 9-Ball Tour Singapore leg winner.

Valle and Millares beat Jech Jech Limen and Roberto Dy, 11-1, Friday night to earn their place in the finals.

After the game was tied at 1-all in the second rack, Valle and Millares clustered 10 racks and never looked back.

In the nightcap, Biado and Mendoza came from behind to score an 11-10 win over former Southeast Asian Games medalist Victor Arpilleda and Fidel Punzalan.

Arpilleda and Punzalan surged to 7-4, 9-6 and 10-9 leads, but Biado and Mendoza tied the match in the 20th rack before pulling off the victory.

Valle and Millare's road to the race-to-11, winner's break semifinals was paved with wins over Ricky Zerna and Jun Talosig, 9-6, Ramil Gallego and Julie Falcon Guevarra, 9-4, and 2007 US Bar Table 9-Ball Champion and 8-Ball Champion Warren Kiamco and Rodrigo Geronimo, 9-5. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

GO

RIVERO

4 Pinoy jins join Olympic qualiying tilt

FOUR MEMBERS OF THE SMART-Petron national taekwondo team will shoot for slots in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games when they see action in the world qualification tournament on Sept. 28-30 in Manchester, Britain.

The jins are Athens Olympic veterans Tshomlee Go and Mary Antoinette Rivero, who are vying in the under 58-kilogram and under 67-kg classes, respectively, Kathleen Eunice Alora (under 49 kg) and Alexander Briones (under 80 kg).

Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado heads the RP delegation to the 120-country qualification meet.

Among the other participants in the prestigious competition are South Korea, Spain, the United States, Chinese Taipei and Australia.

PTA vice president Hong Sung Chon will also join the trip to attend the executive committee meeting of the World Taekwondo Federation.

New rules of WTF will be discussed during the meeting, according to Hong.

Other RP delegation members are coaches Roberto Cruz (men) and Raul Samson (women), Ma. Nelia Sy Ycasas (trainer) and Roland Campos (international referee).

The trip is sponsored by Smart Communications, PLDT, Petron and the Philippine Sports Commission.

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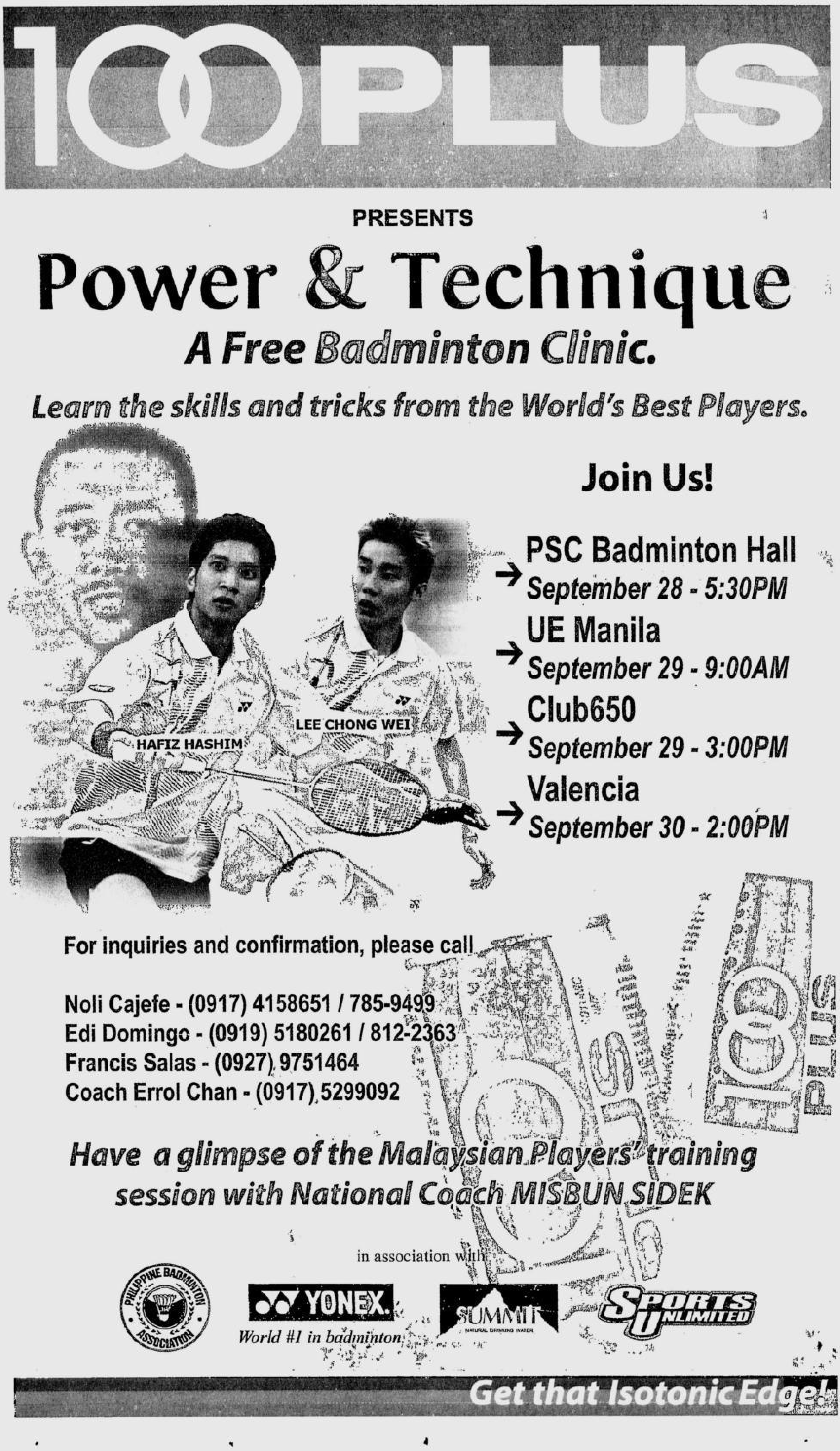
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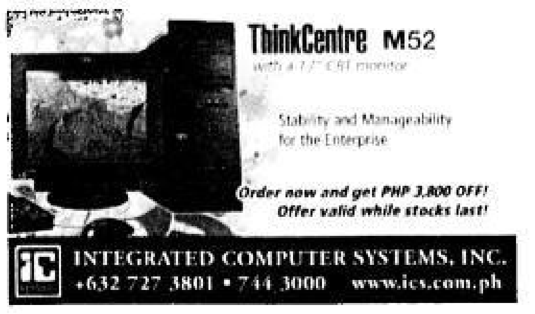
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Gov't borrowings down 15%

In 1st 8 months, only P353B in loans secured

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S borrowings from January to August dropped by 15 percent from a year ago, as better macroeconomic fundamentals allowed it to obtain less loans to cover its expenditure requirements.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that the government borrowed P353.59 billion in the first eight months of the year to finance projects and programs that could not be accommodated by its revenue, and to pay off maturing obligations.

In the first eight months of 2006, government borrowings reached P414.81 billion, 75 percent (P266.77 billion) of which went to settle liabilities that were about to fall due.

Finance officials said the expected decline in the budget deficit, lower interest rates and stronger peso allowed the government to borrow less.

Because of lower interest rates, the government also spent less to pay for interest on its loans. The 91-day Treasury bill rate, for instance, was assumed to average between 4 and 5 percent this year, but it actually hovered at the 3-percent territory.

The appreciation of the peso also helped in trimming part of the government's debt denominated in foreign currencies.

The government's borrowings as of August represented 92.8 percent of the P380.951 billion it intended to borrow for the entire year. This means the government should limit its borrowings for the remainder of the year to only P27.361 billion.

Of the borrowings as of August, P106.875 billion was sourced from foreign lenders. For-

GOV'T/ B3

SMC to make a comeback in soft drink trade

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SAN MIGUEL CORP., SOUTHEAST ASIA'S largest food and beverage firm, is making a comeback in the competitive soft drink industry through its Hong Kong brewery to serve the fast growing market in China, the world's fourth largest economy.

Sources said SMC plans to convert its Hong Kong brewery into a plant that produces soft drinks, whiskey and beer within the fourth quarter. For the conversion, capital expenditure has been placed at roughly $1 million.

San Miguel Hong Kong Brewery Ltd. earlier disclosed to the Hong Kong bourse that its brewery in Yuen Long will cease operations by the end of the month due to relatively high production and operating costs.

San Miguel HK will use instead its Foshan (Shunde) brewery in China after the closure of the Yuen Long brewery.

San Miguel HK management further disclosed that it is now formulating a detailed restructuring plan, including the alternative deployment of the Yuen Long brewery and its relevant assets.

San Miguel HK manufactures and distributes bottled, canned and draught San Miguel beer products.

Soft drink manufacturing in China has been growing rapidly, notching a 27-percent hike in sales as of September last year, according to the China National Light Industry Information Center. Information from online provider Datamonitor also showed that the market for soft drinks in Hong Kong increased between 2000-2005, growing at an average annual rate of 3 percent.

In the Philippines, SMC let go of its soft drink business under Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines last year. SMC sold its 65 percent stake in CCBPI to Atlanta-based The Coca-Cola Co. for $590 million.

The sale gives TCCC full control of the Philippine bottling business, which has been hounded by double-digit volume declines due to "affordability and availability" issues.

Stock analysts said the deal was beneficial to SMC. Although the firm had to give up its 80-percent share in the beverage market, it still needed the cash to settle its huge debt. SMC's debt amounted to P137 billion as of end-June, having ballooned after engaging in aggressive acquisitions in recent years.

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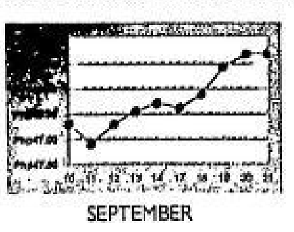

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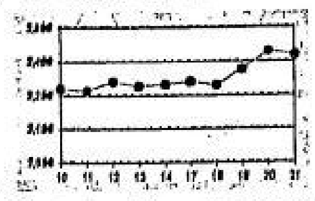


(See stock market report on Page B2)

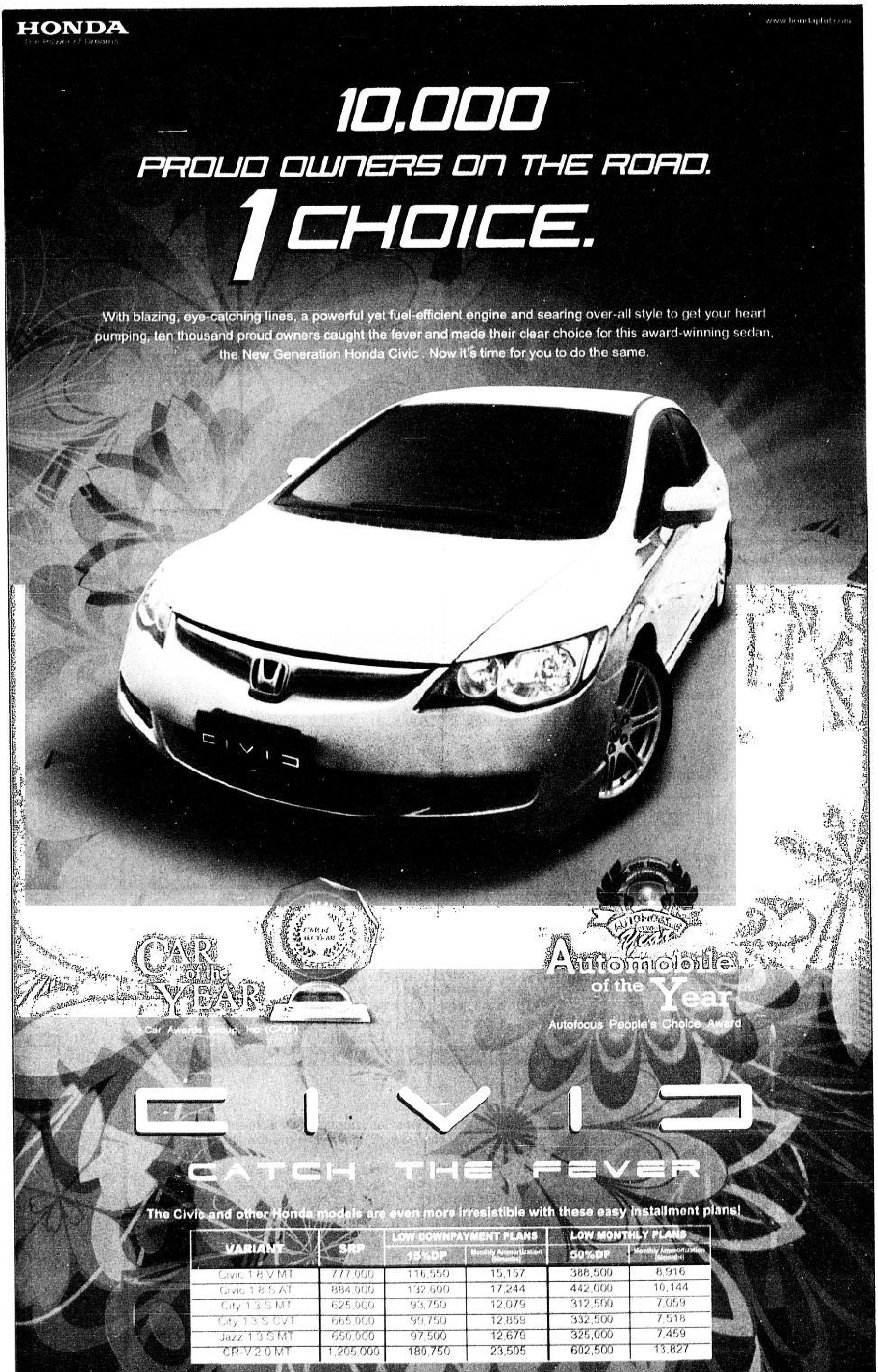
Analysts cite caution

STOCK INVESTORS ARE EXPECTED to continue to track overseas developments this week after the euphoria created by the US Federal Reserve's surprise

ANALYSTS/ B3

IN THIS ISSUE

- RP set to overtake India in business outsourcing /B2
- RP tax effort slipped 13% in first half /B3
- SMC ties up with Malaysian, US firms /B7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HONDA

RP set to overtake India in business outsourcing

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINES IS POISED TO OVERTAKE India as the world's top provider of business process outsourcing services as industry players firm up their strength and marketing efforts.

Cesar B. Bautista, cochair of the National Competitiveness Council (NCC), told the INQUIRER that the Indian cyber services sector was losing its edge as telecommunication infrastructure get saturated and costs go up.

"At the same time, our BPO sector has started strengthening their organization into something like India's Nasscom (National Association of Software and Services Companies), which can represent the members as a bigger and more influential entity," Bautista said.

He was alluding to the Business Process Association of the Philippines, which he said could now be more decisive because it had reformed its structure, unlike the "weak" group it had been in the past years.

Bautista, a former trade secretary who now represents the private sector in the NCC, said it was only expected that the Philippines would emerge as a leading provider of BPO services despite coming into it later than India did.

He noted that information technology-enabled services had become the fastest growing sector in the economy, which is expected to be providing some 400,000 jobs by the end of this year compared to 8,000 in 2000.

"Our cyber services sector is growing much than that of India and the projection that by 2010, the industry would represent a million jobs and $12 billion in revenues is not farfetched," Bautista said.

To prove his point, Bautista cited to a report that US-based research firm Frontier Strategy Group released earlier this month, which identified the Philippines as one of seven markets that would drive corporate profit growth in 2008 and beyond.

Titled "Shift from the BRIC to the Future 7," the study showed that the country—along with Indonesia, inland Brazil (as opposed to the coastal areas), inland China, Mexico, Turkey and Vietnam—was replacing the BRIC countries (coastal Brazil, Russia, urban India, and coastal China) as markets of fast growth.

Based on FSG's survey of at least 100 top executives from top performing firms in the world, 86 percent said the Philippines was a top destination in the Asia-Pacific-together with inland China, Vietnam and Indonesia.

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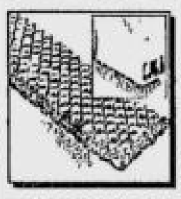

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RP tax effort slipped 13% in first half

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S TAX EFFORT SLIPPED TO 13.8 percent in the first half from 14.7 percent in the same period last year, as the increase in tax collection failed to match the robust growth of the economy.

Tax effort, a closely watched economic indicator, is the ratio between the national government's tax collection and the country's economic output. It measures a government's ability to turn higher economic growth, which is tantamount to higher income, into an increase in tax collection.

The tax effort in the first half was a result of the P3.126 trillion ,in gross domestic product—the most gauge in measuring a country's economic output—and the P431.4 billion in tax and fees collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Bureau of Customs and other government agencies.

The drop has set back the government's plan to increase its tax effort to 15.6 percent by the end of the year, from 14.3 percent in 2006, and increase it further over the medium term until it reaches the pre-Asian crisis level of 17 percent.

Finance officials admitted there was still room for improvement as far as tax collection efficiency was concerned. Measures to plug tax evasion and smuggling have to be stepped up so that government revenues will increase commensurately with the growth of the economy, they added.

By increasing tax collection and allowing government to channel more funds to social services, the benefits of economic growth will trickle down to the masses.

The BIR and the BOC, the two biggest tax collectors for the government, managed to increase collections in the first half from a year ago, but fell short of their respective targets.

The lower-than-expected revenue collection by the BIR and the BOC came about despite the higher-than-expected growth of the economy. In real terms, GDP grew by 7.3 percent in the first half, the fastest in close to two decades.

Unimpressive tax collection in the first half prompted Malacañang to closely watch the performance of the BIR and the BOC.

In July, President Macapagal-Arroyo herself presided command conferences of the BIR and the BOC to personally inquire about programs put in place to address tax evasion and smuggling.

Gov't borrowings . . .

From page B1

eign creditors include multilateral institutions and foreign governments that give official development assistance (ODA), and investors in the international capital market that purchase the government's sovereign bonds.

The Philippines' biggest sources of ODA are the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. Unlike loans obtained from the capital market, ODAs are concessional in nature and impose lower interest rates.

Foreign borrowings as of August included the $1 billion raised from the sale of global bonds in January.

The remainder of the total borrowings as of August, or P246.715 billion, was sourced from the domestic capital market through the sale of Treasury bills and bonds.

The government has adopted the policy of borrowing more from domestic sources to protect itself from foreign exchange volatility.

The government this year hopes to slash its budget deficit to P63 billion, from last year's P64.8 billion.

This is consistent with its aim of posting a balanced budget by next year, or a decade after it last recorded a surplus.

"It is only after we balance the budget that we can reduce our outstanding debt, and therefore substantially lessen our need for borrowings," Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan had said.

Analysts . . .

From page B1

move to cut key interest rate by half a percentage point last week, traders said.

In its weekly report, 2TradeAsia.Com wrote that the local stock market applauded the US Fed's decision, rising 129 points to 3,423.73, or 3.92 percent week-on-week.

But the online broker still cautioned investors over some volatility this week, depending on fund managers' reading of economic data coming from the United States.

2TradeAsia.Com observed that, since the Fed's rate reduction last week, average weekly foreign selling has slowed by 19 percent to P2.32 billion. Average foreign buying also declined but at a moderate pace of 7 percent week-on-week.

"Skeptics are likely to think that there might still be rough times ahead, while contrarians might interpret this as a signal for more flexibility in monetary policies to arrest the housing and financial slump," the broker said.

Meanwhile, AB Capital Securities said that in the shorter term, the market may see some profit-taking after the index's uptick last week. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

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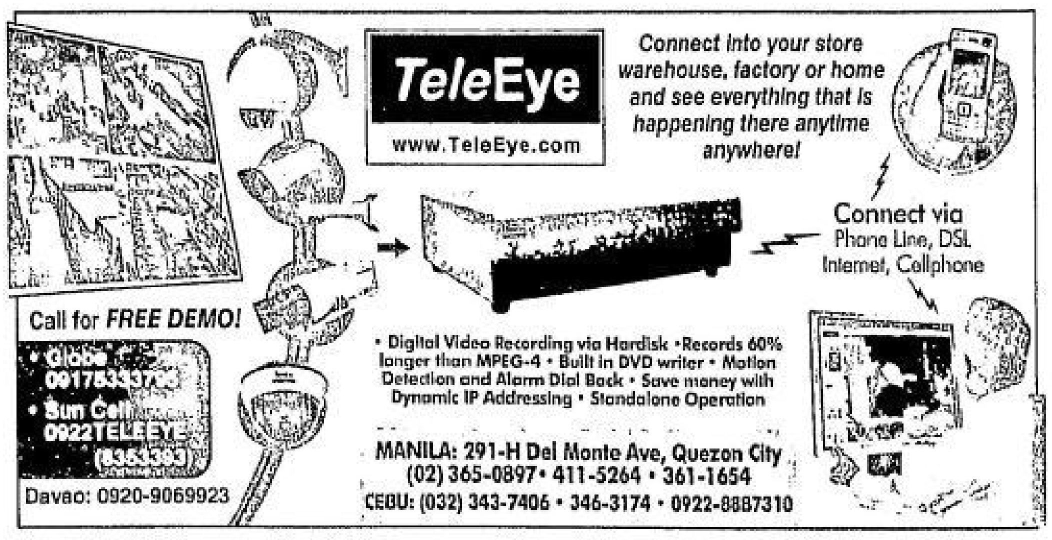
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PELAC Dollar Bond Fund	1.2973	1.2596
PELAC Global Bond Fund	1.1972	1.1787
PELAC Peso Fixed Income Fund	1.0264	1.0134
PELAC Peso Equity Fund	1.2867	1.2490
PELAC Balanced Fund	0.9733	0.9512

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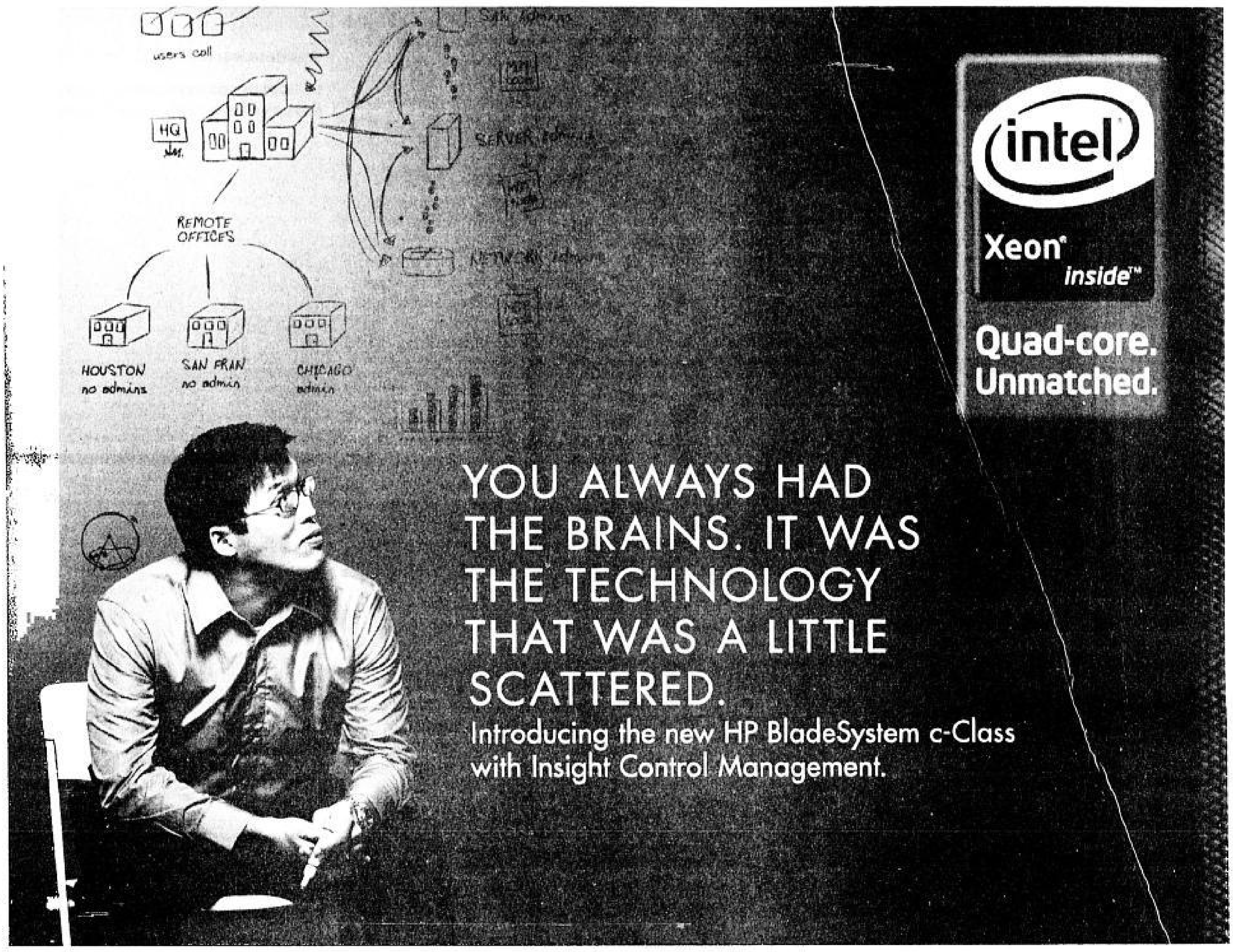
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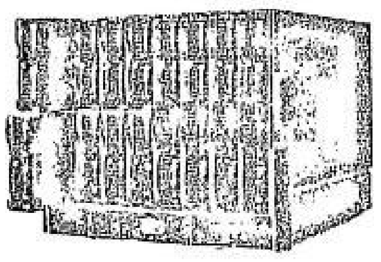

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Jobs: the continuing struggle

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

THE JULY 2007 LABOR FORCE Survey results were recently released by the government, and the news, as usual, is a mix of good and bad.

While the aggregate picture looks generally good, much remains to be desired. Let's examine the situation in order to understand better the directions we need to take to further improve the jobs situation and outlook, and along with it, the poverty picture.

Employment up

Between July last year and July this year, there were 408,000 net new jobs generated in the economy—far lower than the average one million new workers entering the labor force every year.

However, something unusual happened in the past year: We only had 328,000 net new labor force entrants, far less than the usual one million.

As a result, and luckily for us, the new jobs created—though smaller than usual—was more than enough to employ the new entering workers—also smaller, and much more so, than usual.

The general result is thus a positive one: The unemployment rate has gone down to 7.8 percent from 8.1 percent in July last year.

The underemployment rate (workers who have jobs but have expressed need for more work) has also gone down to 22 percent from 23.4 percent last year.

Translated into absolute numbers, joblessness has gone down by 91,000 workers year-on-year (i.e. from July 2006 to July 2007), while underemployment went down by 386,000 workers in the same period.

Worse than April

On the other hand, compared to last April (i.e. a quarter-on-quarter comparison), the overall employment data depict a worsening picture.

In April 2007, the unemployment rate was actually lower, at 7.4 percent, and underemployment rate was also much lower, at 18.9 percent. Since seasonal influences come into play here, the year-on-year comparison above may be more informative.

Still, the numbers show that the number of jobless workers in July was 2.8 million, against last April's 2.7 million, or an increase of 100,000 within three months. There was also an increase of almost one million (951,000) underemployed workers within those three months.

Going back to the year-on-year (i.e. July to July) comparison, a major cause for concern is the net loss of 221,000 jobs in agriculture, suggesting that poverty in the rural areas may have risen.

The industry sector generated 195,000 new jobs, the bulk coming from construction (154,000), consistent with the recent GDP data showing government construction to be the primary source of growth. Mining contributed some 5,000 new jobs in the past year.

As usual, the bulk of the new jobs created were in services, yielding 434,000 new jobs in the past year.

Services jobs

Where did the jobs come from in the dominant services sector? The biggest contribution (161,000 jobs) came from the two fastest growing services sectors, real estate and business activities, including the business process outsourcing (BPO) and call center industries.

Other major contributors were private household employment and transport, storage and communication, yielding a combined total of 121,000 new jobs.

There is some good news on the composition of new jobs by type. The past year saw 283,000 additional wage-paying jobs, while the number of unpaid family workers went down by 53,000. Meanwhile, self-employed workers rose by 145,000.

At first glance, this might suggest that the quality of jobs is improving. But a closer look indicates that the new wage-paying jobs are mostly construction jobs, which are mostly temporary jobs that cease upon completion of specific construction projects.

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	Pls. Call/1,250,000*	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	260,000/Pls. Call*
Baguio Country Club	580,000	550,000
Camp John Hay	330,000	290,000
Canlubang Golf	500,000	440,000
Canyon Woods	90,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	2,100,000
Club Filipino	120,000	80,000
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	Pls. Call*	200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	100,000	Pls. Call
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/160,000*/200,000**	50,000
Luisita Golf B	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corporate	24,000,000	20,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	18,000,000
Manila Polo	5,500,000	4,500,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	280,000/Pls. Call*	250,000
Makati Sports Club A/B*	Pls. Call	180,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	200,000	150,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	150,000	-
Mimosa C1/C2*/C3**	220,000/650,000**	150,000/280,000*
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	170,000/250,000*/350,000**	-
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	120,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	150,000*/250,000**	130,000*/150,000**
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	240,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/130,000*	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	2,100,000	1,600,000
The Palms Country Club	380,000	Pls. Call
Tagaytay Country Club	320,000	290,000
Tagaytay Highlands	680,000	630,000
Tagaytay Midlands	670,000	630,000
The Country Club	2,200,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	180,000	-
Valley Golf	250,000	Pls. Call
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	80,000
Wack Wack Golf	10,000,000	9,500,000

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,200,000	1,050,000
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,250,000	1,100,000
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	600,000	550,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	330,000	280,000
CANLUBANG	480,000	450,000
CAPITOL HILLS	40,000	30,000
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	-	2,000,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	120,000	90,000
CLUB FILIPINO	140,000	90,000
EAGLERIDGE "A"	170,000	-
EAGLERIDGE "B"	250,000	-
EAGLERIDGE "C"	330,000	-
FOREST HILLS "A"	90,000	80,000
LUISITA GOLF "A"	350,000	240,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	220,000	200,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	300,000	220,000
MANILA GOLF (CORP)	Please Call	25,000,000
MANILA GOLF (IND)	23,000,000	18,000,000
MANILA POLO	Please Call	4,500,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	300,000	280,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	650,000	-
MANILA YACHT CLUB	200,000	-
MIMOSA (IND)	220,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "A"	160,000	100,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	170,000	150,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	300,000	280,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	330,000	300,000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	170,000	130,000
ROCKWELL CLUB	350,000	250,000
SPA & LODGE	500,000	450,000
STA. ELENA "A"	1,900,000	1,700,000
STA. ELENA "B"	-	2,050,000
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	300,000	290,000
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	700,000	630,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	850,000	-
THE PALMS COUNTRY CLUB "A"	370,000	300,000
VALLE VERDE (IND)	100,000	90,000
VALLEY GOLF	Please Call	210,000
WACK-WACK GOLF CLUB	10,000,000	Please Call

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(As of September 21, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.4	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc	9	9	9	9	16,000
73	38	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc	60	60	58	58	687,000
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	67	67.5	66.5	67.5	1,652,100
935	630	China Banking Corp	830	840	825	835	14,620
23.5	18.5	Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	600
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	420,000
75.5	39.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	53	53	52	52.5	4,366,800
65.5	33	Philippine National Bank	47.5	47.5	47	47	82,600
68	41	Philippine Savings Bank	63	63	63	63	500
39.57	15	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	22.25	22.25	22	22.25	1,861,700
90	49.5	Security Bank Corp.	68.5	68.5	68	68	271,500
[illegible]	[illegible]	Union Bank of the Philippines	55.5	55.5	55	55	[illegible]
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
[illegible]	1.76	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	3.95	4	3.95	3.95	[illegible]
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.94	1.98	3,544,000
16.25	3.15	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	32,600
1.6	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.87	0.94	0.87	0.94	130,000
42	29	First Metro Investment Corp.	41.5	42	41.5	42	6,000
5	2.95	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.5	3.55	3.45	3.5	1,604,000
3.1	1.02	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	65,000
2,335.00	1,945.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,300.00	2,300.00	2,300.00	2,300.00	90
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1.48	1.5	[illegible]	1.5	[illegible]
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
[illegible]	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp	5	5.1	5	5	[illegible]
0.57	0.23	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	350,000
70	47.5	First Gen Corp	64.5	64.5	64	64	313,700
92	48.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	73.5	76	73.5	75	2,345,700
15	8.8	Manila Water Company Inc	14.25	14.25	13.5	14	4,402,200
105.45	17.05	Manila Electric Company	83.5	83.5	81	82.5	1,032,300
7	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.4	24,423,000
6.5	3.9	Petron Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	6,820,000
14.75	6.6	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	70,000
1.9	0.95	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.2	1.22	1.2	1.22	573,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.1	Alaska Milk Corp	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	54,000
2.95	1.66	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.7	1.7	2,663,000
2.6	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	5,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	3,000
0.98	0.42	RFM Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.84	0.84	500,000
3.85	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.38	2.55	2.38	2.5	372,000
80	59	San Miguel Corp. A	60.5	61	60	61	17,900
88	59.5	San Miguel Corp. B	61	61.5	61	61	177,500
0.66	0.22	Swift Foods Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	130,000
[illegible]	15.75	Universal Robina Corp	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.5	[illegible]
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	1.73	EEI Corp	4.3	4.3	3.95	4.2	516,000
9.2	4.9	Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.6	7.7	7.5	7.7	359,000
7	1.36	Republic Cement Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95	348,000
2	0.78	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc	1.12	1.14	1.1	1.12	4,319,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.15	4.2	4	4	5,234,000
1.16	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp	1	1	1	1	104,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	1.96	A. Soriano Corp	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	37,000
0.17	0.025	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.0975	0.105	0.0975	0.105	40,500,000
1.28	0.22	APC Group Inc.	0.72	0.77	0.72	0.76	14,100,000
0.018	0.007	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	369,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	22,600,000
9.7	5.1	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	2,440,000
0.021	0.0075	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	34,200,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.2	5.2	5	5.1	6,233,000
1.38	0.51	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.8	0.84	0.8	0.84	170,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.26	2.26	2.22	2.22	984,000
500	375	Ayala Corp.	500	510	500	510	245,960
14.5	7.04	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	12.75	13	12.75	13	3,000
5.8	1.22	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4	4.05	3.85	4	6,149,000
10.25	3.7	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.3	8.1	8.2	1,323,000
6.9	1.06	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	3.85	3.95	3.8	3.95	66,000
2.5	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. A	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	5,000
8	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4	143,000
14.5	5.9	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	9.8	9.9	9.8	9.8	122,000
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	79,000
11.5	1.1	Multitech Investments Corp.	5.6	5.8	5.2	5.7	7,518,000
8.2	2.8	PAL Holdings Inc.	7	7.1	7	7.1	326,000
0.215	0.01	Pacifica Inc. A	0.16	0.175	0.155	0.17	372,850,000
0.75	0.175	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.41	0.43	0.41	0.43	7,760,000
2.1	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	50,000
452.5	224.42	SM Investments Corp.	375	375	360	360	409,180
0.73	0.125	Sinophil Corp.	0.37	0.4	0.37	0.39	39,950,000
1.06	0.59	Solid Group Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	600,000
1.6	0.9	South China Resources Inc.	1.4	1.44	1.4	1.44	65,000
23	1	TKC Steel Corp.	18	18	18	18	20,000
0.75	0.1	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.37	0.39	0.36	0.37	84,820,000
1.1	0.26	Zeus Holdings Inc	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.53	490,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	0.81	A Brown Company Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	93,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings, Inc.	8.1	8.1	8	8	15,000
1.06	0.32	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.72	230,000
19.25	11.25	Ayala Land Inc.	15	15	14.75	15	12,693,900
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.12	1.14	1.12	1.14	1,902,000
4.7	2.05	Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.85	3.6	3.7	127,000
0.86	0.31	Crown Equities Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	50,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.44	0.47	0.44	0.45	3,340,000
0.99	0.5	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.68	12,440,000
0.47	0.05	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.26	25,510,000
1.48	0.51	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.1	1.16	1.1	1.16	10,286,000
2.44	1.17	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.46	1.4	1.46	47,615,000
0.5	0.1	Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	70,000
1.12	0.24	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.64	1,810,000
4.4	1.73	Megaworld Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.05	3.2	34,944,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.65	3.85	91,000
0.7	0.125	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.39	2,880,000
0.87	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.46	0.47	0.45	0.46	1,430,000
9.2	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4	4	3.95	4	86,000
23	12.5	Robinson Land Corp.	17	17.25	16.75	17.25	1,977,700
5.9	1.52	SM Development Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.85	3.85	1,776,000
13.5	6.64	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.25	5,883,600
3.25	0.87	Shang Properties Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.55	2.55	186,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.64	1,050,000
0.49	0.08	Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.28	3,500,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc	5	5.1	5	5.1	6,320,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	16.25	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31	31.5	31	31.5	91,500
11.75	8.7	GMA Network Inc	9.5	9.5	9.3	9.5	215,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc	1.3	1.3	1.26	1.28	1,250,000
1,445.00	1,055.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,400.00	1,400.00	1,375.00	1,380.00	82,200
2,855.00	2,150.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,825.00	2,825.00	2,800.00	2,800.00	83,890
7.9	4.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.8	1,217,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.195	0.2	0.195	0.2	5,200,000
11.5	2	IPVG Corp.	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.5	313,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	11,200,000
0.32	0.043	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.185	0.195	0.185	0.19	29,240,000
0.0725	0.028	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.049	25,500,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.65	2.7	2.6	2.7	296,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	41,000
6.8	3.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.65	3.7	680,000
34.5	16	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc	33	33	32.5	33	1,055,000
2.16	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc	1.76	2.04	1.76	2.04	10,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
16.5	5	Acesite (Phils.) Hotel Corp.	5	5.1	5	5.1	15,000
0.98	0.3	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc	0.56	0.56	0.53	0.53	320,000
		EDUCATION					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
7.5	3	Easycall Comm. Phils. Inc.	4	4	4	4	10,000
6	1.94	Macroasia Corp.	4.7	4.75	4.7	4.75	555,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	18,000
30	10	Parys Inc	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	79,200
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	63,700,000
7.6	3.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	5.3	6	5.3	5.9	2,059,000
7.7	3.85	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	5.5	6.1	5.5	5.9	935,000
21.25	7.7	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	14.25	14.5	14.25	14.5	1,128,000
14.25	8.9	Benguet Corp. A	11.25	12	11.25	12	56,000
3.1	0.42	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	1.86	1.96	1.84	1.96	112,147,000
0.36	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.33	0.36	0.32	0.36	176,870,000
0.42	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.34	0.38	0.34	0.38	54,330,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	673,000,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	63,000,000
0.021	0.0079	Oriteo Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	36,000,000
7.4	3.45	Philex Mining Corp.	7.1	7.4	7.1	7.4	44,082,000
43	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	31.5	32	31.5	31.5	89,600
1.36	0.39	United Paragon Mining Corp	1.02	1.12	1.02	1.06	8,642,000
1.8	0.56	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp	1.22	1.26	1.2	1.24	3,786,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Energy Corp.	0.34	0.38	0.34	0.36	49,290,000
0.025	0.0095	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.024	60,400,000
0.027	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	12,700,000
11.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	9.8	9.8	9.6	9.7	32,000
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.025	83,100,000

AVERAGES			VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	893.05 DOWN	5.14	15,853,310	472,636,175.00
Industrial	4,512.13 DOWN	15.58	158,134,800	657,273,715.00
Holding Firms	1,910.28 DOWN	16.84	1,013,148,140	539,677,075.00
Property	1,498.40 DOWN	0.07	180,190,169	554,539,083.74
Service	1,665.41 DOWN	16.54	77,557,790	416,902,690.00
Mining & Oil	7,040.36 UP	301.24	1,445,346,600	709,107,045.00
All Shares Index	2,143.53 DOWN	12.86		
PSEI	3,423.73 DOWN	18.65		
		GRAND TOTALS	2,890,230,809	3,350,135,783.74

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

Maybank

Currencies

September 21, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.710833	1.000000	45.3750
Japan	Yen	0.006205	0.008729	0.3961
United Kingdom	Pound	1.427779	2.008600	91.1402
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.091333	0.128487	5.8301
Switzerland	Franc	0.606410	0.853097	38.7093
Canada	Dollar	0.709485	0.998104	45.2890
Singapore	Dollar	0.472629	0.664894	30.1696
Australia	Dollar	0.612893	0.862218	39.1231
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.885649	2.652731	120.3677
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.190063	0.267380	12.1324
Brunei	Dollar	0.471063	0.662691	30.0696
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000077	0.000109	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.022354	0.031447	1.4269
UAE	Dirham	0.193688	0.272480	12.3638
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.406800	63.8336
Korea	Won	0.000771	0.001084	0.0492
China	Yuan**	0.094595	0.133076	6.0383
Denmark	Kroner	0.134163	0.188740	8.5641
India	Rupee	0.017914	0.025202	1.1435
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.206368	0.290318	13.1732
New Zealand	Dollar	0.525375	0.739098	33.5366
Sweden	Kroner	0.108635	0.152828	6.9346
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021498	0.030243	1.3723

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Sept. 20, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Sept. 20, 2007

SDAs attract P433B in excess money

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas has locked up P433.5 billion of excess money in its high-yielding special deposit accounts as of Aug. 24, making the central bank more reliant now on this mopping-up tool than on its overnight borrowings.

Based on BSP data, funds placed in SDAs were almost double the P240.9 billion mopped up by the overnight borrowings or reverse repurchase agreements (RRPs) in the same period.

Official statistics showed that placements in SDAs had dramatically increased since May this year, following the amendments made by the BSP to the rules governing the use of this facility.

Under the new rules, even banks' trust departments and nonbank state corporations can place funds in SDAs and earn attractive interest rates depending on the term of the placements. To make the SDAs more attractive, the BSP made these instruments eligible as compliance to banks' 50-percent liquidity floor, or the portion of deposits and deposit substitutes that should be held in the form of negotiable and transferable government securities. This serves as a buffer in case of heavy withdrawals.

Before the SDA facility was improved in May, placements in this facility amounted to only P54 billion while the amount siphoned off using RPPs was P341 billion.

The SDA placements widened to P280 billion in June and further to P365 billion in July before breaching the P400 billion mark in August.

Funds placed in RRPs steadily dropped from P341 billion in April to P198 billion in July.

Last July, the BSP decided to scrap a tiering system that paid lower rates on high volume of funds parked with the central bank. It also slashed its overnight borrowing rate by 150 basis points to 6 percent.

The lifting of the tiering system boosted the RRP placements to P240.9 billion as of August.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the reforms on the SDAs had allowed the central bank to curb the growth of broad money supply in the country to below 20 percent—or a level deemed sufficient to meet the central bank's inflation objectives.

Minimum placement in the SDAs is P10 million, with additional amounts allowed in increments of P1 million.

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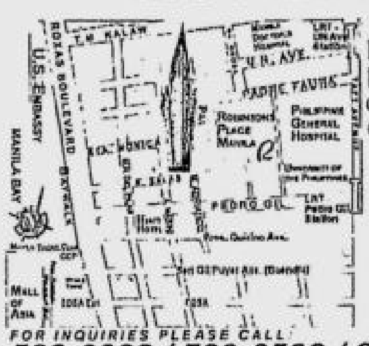

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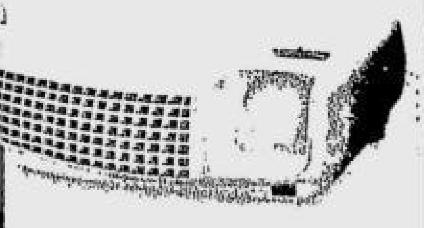

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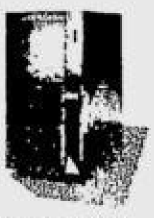

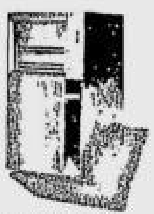

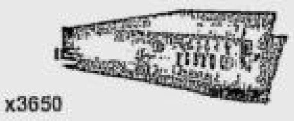

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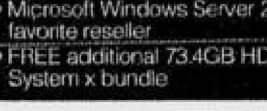

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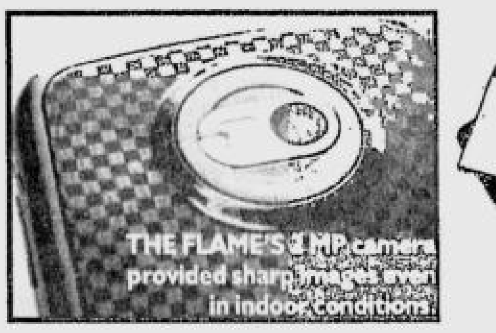
THE SIDES and front of the **XDA Flame** have a soft touch finish, which gives it an excellent tactile feel.



THE FLAME'S 2 MP camera provided sharp images even in indoor conditions.

FLAME'S battery could be its only weakness

High-tech head turner

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

PULL OUT THIS LATest Xda from O2 and you'll be guaranteed to earn envious stares thanks to its crisp-looking displays and really large touch screen.

At 12.6 cm in length, 7.4 cm wide, 1.75 cm thick and with a 3.6-inch display (not to mention its 190 grams weight), the Xda Flame is larger than most PDA phones in the market today.

It brings to mind images of the old Xdas. But make no mistake: The Xda Flame is a different species and a breakthrough one.

It is the first PDA phone to feature two processors—an Intel XScale PXA 270 processor running at 520 MHz for primary functions and an NVIDIA GoForce 5500.

Interesting development

The addition of a graphics processing unit is an interesting development for this PDA-phone as the Xda Flame has now the capability to deliver accelerated multimedia tasks such as audio and video in hardware resulting to console-class 3D gaming, DVD-quality video, sharp photo playback, as well as the ability to display interactive 3D charts and diagrams during presentations.

As a complement, the Xda Flame features SRS WOW HD for a more enjoyable movie viewing experience in surround sound. It also offers other entertainment options such as access to FM radio and Windows Media Player 10, among others.

For music and movie playback, the Xda Flame features a generous 2 gigabytes of onboard memory for storing these files. This could be further expanded using the built-in MicroSD card slot, ensuring that you never run out of storage space.

Business device

However, let's not forget that the Xda Flame still caters to professionals, and they will find that the Xda Flame is brimming with productivity features, including Microsoft Windows Mobile 5.0 applications (Microsoft Office Outlook Mobile with Direct Push Technology, Microsoft Office programs for Windows Mobile, Pocket MSN), O2 exclusive applications (O2 Media Plus, O2 AutoInstall, O2 Phone Plus), as well as other applications, such as Adobe Reader LE, CodeWallet Pro, Java 2 Micro Edition, Video Telephony, Wireless Manager and WorldMate.

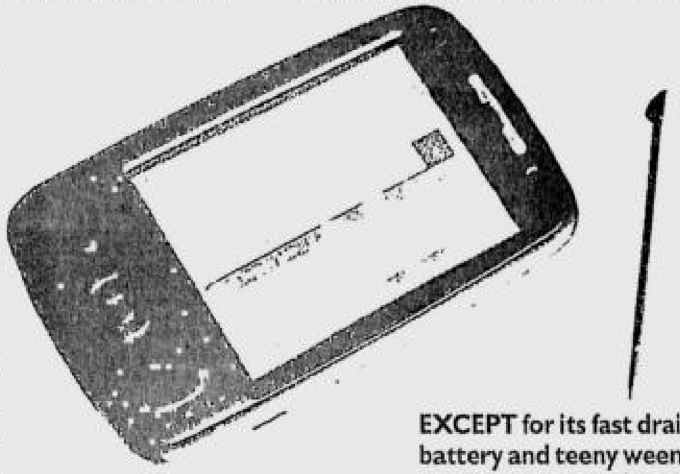
It also allows video conferencing through a secondary camera in front (that complements the 2-megapixel camera with autofocus and 4X digital zoom at the back).

Connectivity-wise, the Xda Flame is both a 3G and a triband GSM phone with built in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth 2.0 networking. It even has support for TV out (for displaying video, photos, and PowerPoint presentations).

Indeed, the Xda Flame is a good PDA-phone especially when performing most business-oriented tasks or using its multimedia features.

But like all PDA phones with high-resolution displays and extensive collection of features and capabilities, the Xda Flame's 1,620 mAh, Li-polymer battery can rundown very quickly—just one day of regular use or even half a day if a lot of applications are open.

Solution? Never forget the charger.



EXCEPT for its fast draining battery and teeny weeny stylus the Xda Flame is already perfect.

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NATIONWIDE

Dual SIM phone comes to town

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE FIRST DUAL-ACTIVE SIM phone model is in the market, launched by Solid Group under the brand name myPhone.

Several China-made models with dual SIM slots have entered the local gray market, but most have to be turned on and then off again when a user wants to toggle between SIMs.

The interface takes time to learn as well.

In contrast, the T22 Duo does not have to restart each time the user wants to switch SIMs, and its interface is patterned after the major phone brands, according to Solid Group president Dave Lim.

That is good news for consumers who want to maintain two active lines.

It is also recommended for frequent travellers who prefer to buy temporary SIMs when abroad without discarding their main SIM. The T22 weighs 117 grams, measuring 112 x 50 x 15 mm in dimension.

Like others in the myPhone Touch series—the T11 Multimedia Phone that can be used as a web cam when connected to a laptop, and thw T33 GPS PocketPCPhone—the T22 has a touch screen and alphanumeric keypad.

The T22 has a handwriting recognition tool as well, but this can interrupt usage for those who use their fingers instead of the stylus.

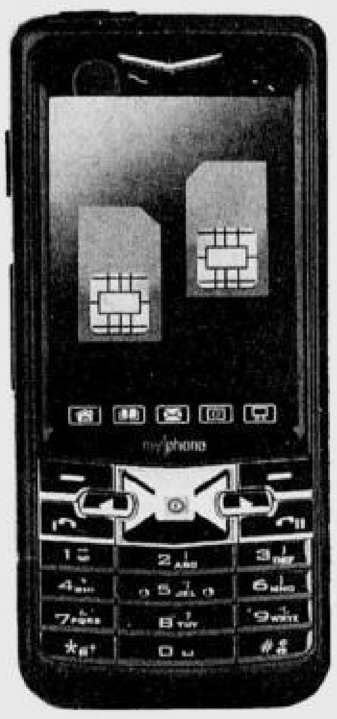
The handset is not really a smartphone but has similar applications, including organizers.

For multimedia, the T22 has a video player, two megapixel camera and mp3/mp4 recorder and player. It has a 2MB built-in user memory that can be augmented by a Micro SD/T-flash memory card.

The handset connects via GPRS/GSM 900/1800. It also has bluetooth, SMS, EMS, MMS, e-mail andGPRS-powered browser.

The unit costs P9,999.

Authorized dealers are CMK Cellphones, Cellcom (Tacloban), ComWorks Inc., Electroworld Cebu, Grace Pick & Carry Ent. (Dumaguete), Mega Cellular Network Inc., MemoXpress, Mobile Experts, Mobile One, Hello, Mactel, Oxford, Quality Cellular Phone Center, AV-Surfer, Electronics Boutique, Semicon Inc., Saver's Digital Hub, Wellcom Telecom Supermarket, Phone Patch Zamboanga, Techno Mart Cagayan/Davao, and Simplus Telecom Concepts.



Intel showcases first 32nm chip, next-generation microprocessor

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA—INTEL Corp. has out-lined new products, chip designs and manufacturing technologies that will enable the company to keep its lead ahead of the industry pack.

Speaking to industry leaders, developers and industry watchers at the Intel Developer Forum (IDF) here, company president and CEO Paul Otellini showed the industry's first working chips built using 32 nanometer (nm) technology, with transistors so small that more than 4 million of them could fit on the period at the end of this sentence. Intel's 32nm process technology is expected to begin production in 2009.

Otellini also described the near-term advantages computer users will experience with Intel's upcoming 45nm family of Penryn processors, which are based on its high-k metal gate transistor technology. The industry's first 45nm processors will be available from Intel in November.

The company also demonstrated for the first time the next-generation chip architecture called Nehalem, due out next year.

"Our tick-tock strategy of alternating next generation silicon technology and a new microprocessor architecture—year after year—is accelerating the pace of innovation in the industry," said Otellini.

"Tick-tock is the engine creating today's most advanced technologies and keeps them coming out at a rapid cadence. Our customers and computer users around the world can count on Intel's innovation engine and manufacturing capability to deliver state-of-the-art performance that rapidly becomes mainstream."

When Intel introduces Penryn in November, it will be the world's first high-volume 45nm processor. Penryn, along with the Silverthorne family of 45nm processors (available next year) will have the small feature size, low-power requirements and high-performance capabilities to meet a wide variety of computing needs from handheld Internet computers to high-end servers.

Intel will quickly ramp the technology with the introduction of 15 new 45nm processors by the end of the year, and another 20 in the first quarter of 2008, extending Intel's leadership in product performance.

"We expect our Penryn processors to provide up to 20-percent performance increase while improving energy efficiency," said Otellini.

Looking to 2008, Otellini made the first public demonstration of Intel's Nehalem processor and said the company is on track to deliver the new processor design in the second half of the year.

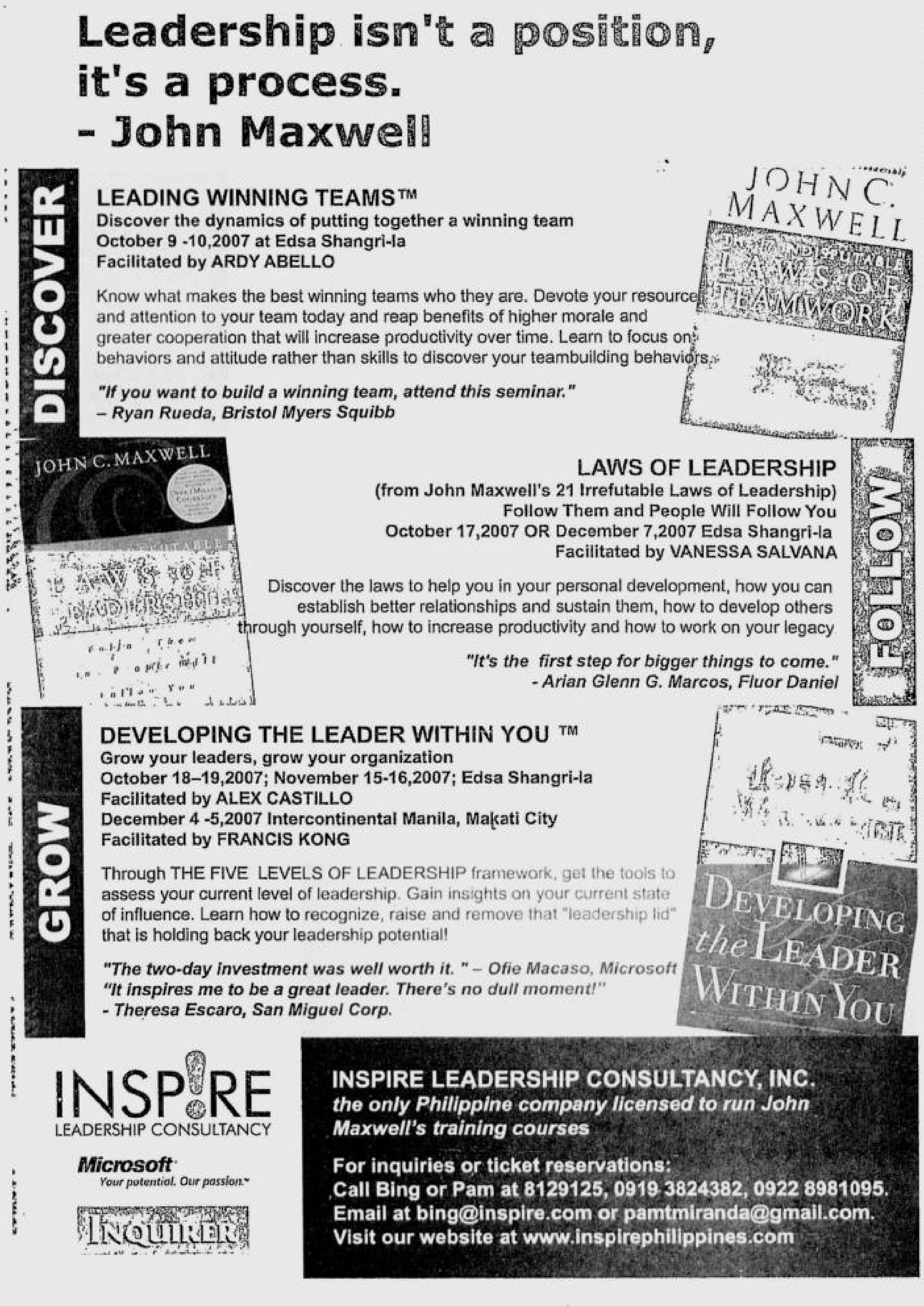
The Nehalem will be the first Intel processor to use the QuickPath Interconnect system architecture. Quickpath will include integrated memory controller technology and improved communication links between system components to significantly improve overall system performance.

"Nehalem is an entirely new architecture that leverages Intel's Core Microarchitecture, bringing leading-edge performance advantages, power efficiency and important new server features to market just a year after Intel leads the industry to 45nm technology," said Otellini.

Describing other Intel technologies destined to come to market, Otellini showed the world's first 300mm wafer built using next-generation 32nm process technology.

The development of advanced test chips serves as a critical milestone in the company's march toward high-volume manufacturing of 32nm process technology. With plans to introduce processors built on 32nm technology in 2009, Intel will maintain its industry lead delivering the most advanced technologies.

Otellini holds a wafer of new chips while he addresses the Intel Developer Forum in San Francisco, California. AFP



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it's a process.
- John Maxwell

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$300-M loan for LGUs OKd

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has approved the national government's plan to tap a $300-million credit facility of the Asian Development Bank, which seeks to strengthen governance in cities and municipalities.

The policy-making Monetary Board has approved the facility for local government units (LGUs) "in principle" during its meeting last Thursday, BSP sources said.

The BSP is mandated by law to screen all borrowings by the state and state-owned corporations, as well as the foreign borrowings of private sector entities that need to acquire dollars from the banking system for repayments.

The board's approval "in principle" means the government can start negotiations for the loan terms.

The facility seeks to enhance the financial management capability and operational efficiency of cities and municipalities. It aims to strengthen the LGUs' procurement practices, ability to raise revenue on their own and their management skills.

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan announced the government's plan to tap the LGU credit facility last week.

The government wants to shore up the LGUs' capability to manage resources and maximize revenue-generating potentials to reduce their dependence on internal revenue allotments (IRA) from the national government.

Under the Local Government Code, LGUs automatically get 40 percent of the internal revenues generated by the national government.

The new ODA program of the ADB also seeks to help local government officials find alternative ways of raising income, such as the issuance of local government bonds.

SMC ties up with Malaysian, US firms

Energy unit, partners to bid for 25-yr Transco concession

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SAN MIGUEL CORP. (SMC) has teamed up with US private equity firm Texas Pacific Group (TPG) and Malaysian utility firm Tenaga Nasional Berhad for its bid to acquire the 25-year concession to operate National Transmission Corp.

INQUIRER sources said San Miguel Energy Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary of SMC, led one of the five groups that had submitted prequalification documents for the Transco bidding in December.

TPG is a global private investment firm managing $30 billion in capital.

It invests in companies in various industries, particularly those that require equity capital of between $100 million and $750 million.

Publicly listed Tenaga, in the meantime, is the largest electricity utility company in Malaysia. It is engaged in generation, transmission and distribution of electricity. Tenaga controls Malaysia's largest generation capacity of about 11,000 megawatts.

Earlier, A. Brown Co.'s Monte Oro Grid Resources and Metro Pacific Investments Corp., through subsidiary Two Rivers Pacific Holdings Corp., have disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange that they had also submitted prequalification documents for the Tranco bidding.

Two Rivers has joined forces with Italy's Terna-Rete Elettrica Nazionale.

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Gorp. will announce the prequalified bidders on Oct. 12.

SMC said it would pour P35 billion (about $750 million) or roughly 10 percent of its total assets into new businesses in power, mining, infrastructure and utilities.

SMC chair and chief executive Eduardo Cojuangco had expressed confidence that the ventures in mining, power, utilities and infrastructure would deliver optimum value for shareholders.

To help fund SMC's expansion into new businesses, shareholders earlier approved an increase in authorized capital stock to P37.5 billion from P22.5 billion.

Planned Epira amendments bucked

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PRIVATE ELECTRIC POWER Operators Association Inc. (Pepoa), an organization of distribution utilities outside Manila Electric Co.'s franchise area, has strongly opposed the planned amendments to RA 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira).

In a presentation to the Senate subcommittee on energy last Wednesday, Pepoa president Ranulfo Ocampo said amending the Epira, particularly lowering the privatization threshold for the implementation of open access, would likely jack up power rates in the long run.

The proposal to reduce the 70-percent National Power Corp. privatization requirement for open access declaration to only 50 percent or even 30 percent would result in an uneven playing field.

He said amending this particular provision would be tantamount to rewarding noncomplying entities.

Also, the dominant player—in this case Napocor and Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., could abuse its market power, he said.

"Electricity prices will not go down but may even go up due to price manipulation," he added.

House Bill No. 1889, penned by House energy committee chair and Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo and Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, sought to reduce the current 70-percent Napocor privatization threshold to only 30 percent so that retail competition and open access could be implemented soon.

It likewise proposed to bring down from 70 percent to 30 percent the percentage of capacities covered by IPP contracts to be placed under the control and management of IPP administrators.

Also, Ocampo said amending the Epira at this time would send the wrong signals to investors looking at acquiring Napocor plants which are being privatized.

"Prospective buyers of Napocor assets will take a wait-and-see attitude if the Epira will be amended. The rules will again be unclear. Thus, the privatization schedule will again be derailed," he said.

He added that the problem of the power sector had more to do with the implementation of the law than with the law itself.

To address this problem, he said the Joint Congressional Power Commission should work on fine-tuning the law's implementing rules and regulations.

DA's planting program exceeds targets

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE said it had exceeded planting targets for its quick turnaround planting scheme in Visayas and Mindanao by more than 11,000 hectares.

It said a total of 99,217 hectares had been planted to *palay* since the program started on Aug. 1, exceeding the target of 88,174 hectares.

The QTA scheme was implemented to mitigate the impact of the prolonged dry spell on rice harvest in certain regions in Luzon.

According to the DA, these QTA areas are expected to yield about 300,000 metric tons of rice.

With more areas planted under the QTA, the projected rice production could even reach as much as 350,000 metric tons, thus helping the government achieve its 2007 full-year target *palay* production of 16.23 million metric tons.

The DA said it was confident that rice supply would be enough for the whole year, given the additional harvests from the QTA areas and the current buffer stocks in the warehouses of the National Food Authority.

According to data from the Gintuang Masaganang Ani Rice Program, Region 12 led the QTA planting with 33,858 ha; followed by Region 10 with 13,604 ha; and Region 6 with 12,043 ha.

The QTA scheme uses early-maturing seeds in fully irrigated areas to recoup lost rice output due to dry spell damages. *Amy Remo*

No free lunch...

From page B4

Who are the unemployed? The latest data show that of the 2.8 million jobless workers, 8 out of 10 are young workers between the ages of 15 to 34, and 6 out of 10 did not go beyond high school education.

This tells us that the kind of jobs we need in the short term are mostly those that will readily employ these young and relatively undereducated job-seekers.

Where are the unemployed? The worst unemployment rates continue to be in Metro Manila (13.1 percent unemployment), and in Central Luzon (11.1 percent). Meanwhile, Cagayan Valley, the Zamboanga Peninsula enjoyed the lowest unemployment rates, with joblessness running at less than 4 percent.

The jobless can't wait

What do we need to do? Given the relatively low education levels of the unemployed, call centers and BPOs are clearly not the answer for them. Indeed, anecdotes abound about how there are thousands of applicants to these types of jobs, but very few now manage to qualify.

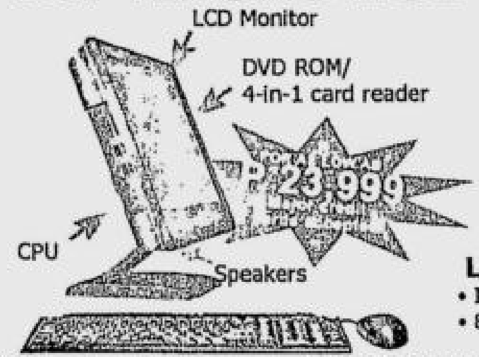
There is much catching up that our educational system has to do. Our efforts in the near term must thus emphasize job-creation in sectors like agriculture (especially because job losses there have been particularly severe in the past year) and tourism, which can yield substantial new jobs demanding less skills in a relatively shorter time—provided we provide the right environment for it in terms of policy (e.g. open skies), and in terms of facilities.

Past experience tells us that pursuing these is a lot easier than getting our educational system to catch up with the needs of the times—something that we should indeed put top priority on, but would take a whole generation to accomplish.

Meanwhile, the almost 3 million jobless out there cannot afford to wait.

Ateneo's next Eagle Watch Economic and Political Briefing will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 26 at 8:30 a.m. at the Veritas Room, Ateneo Rockwell campus. Apart from the usual economic analysis and outlook, the briefing will discuss the current "democratic recession" and developments in the global financial markets.

For reservations and more information, please call Joannie Tongol at 929-7035 or Guia Janson at 929-7970, or e-mail me at chabito@ateneo.edu.



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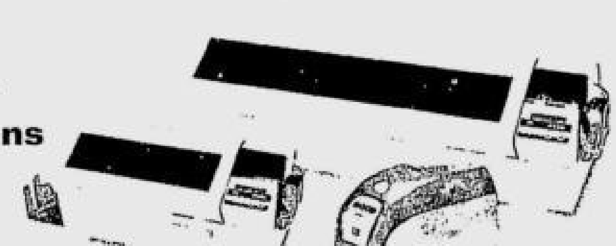

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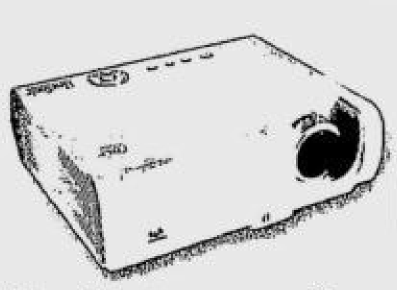

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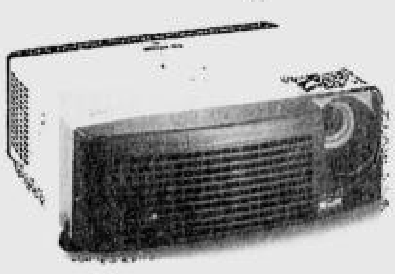

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Your barangay needs you!

Be a candidate in the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections on October 29, 2007.

WHEN TO FILE YOUR CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY	:	From September 29, 2007 to 12:00 midnight of **October 18, 2007** (except Saturdays, Sundays and holidays)
WHERE TO FILE	:	Office of the Election Officer of the city/municipality concerned
OFFICIALS TO BE ELECTED	:	(a) For the Barangay Elections: One (1) ***Punong Barangay*** and seven (7) ***Sangguniang Barangay*** Members
		(b) For the ***Sangguniang Kabataan*** Elections: One (1) SK Chairman and seven (7) ***Sangguniang Kabataan*** Members

QUALIFICATIONS:

(a) Candidates for ***Punong Barangay*** and ***Sangguniang Barangay*** Members must be:
- (1) Filipino citizens;
- (2) At least eighteen (18) years old on election day;
- (3) Able to read and write Filipino or any local language or dialect; and
- (4) Registered voters of the barangay where they intend to run for office and residents thereof for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the day of the election.

(b) Candidates for ***Sangguniang Kabataan*** Chairman and ***Sangguniang Kabataan*** Members must be:
- (1) Filipino citizens;
- (2) At least fifteen (15) years old but not more than eighteen (18) years old on election day;
- (3) Able to read and write Filipino, English or the local dialect; and
- (4) Qualified voters of the *katipunan ng kabataan* of the barangay where they intend to run for office and residents thereof for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the election.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT:

All candidates for the October 29, 2007 synchronized barangay and sangguniang kabataan elections are required to undergo a mandatory drug test conducted by drug testing centers authorized/accredited by the Department of Health. The drug test certificate shall be filed with the Office of the Election Officer concerned not later than October 18, 2007.

REMINDER:

The ban on (a) bearing, carrying or transporting firearms or other deadly weapons; (b) use of security personnel or bodyguards; (c) bearing arms by any member of security or police organization of government agencies and other similar organizations; and (d) organization or maintenance of reaction forces shall begin on September 29, 2007 and end on November 13, 2007.

Sources: COMELEC Resolution Nos. 8297, 8301and 8302, RA 9164, RA 9340 and RA 7160

For more inquiries and information, please coordinate with your local COMELEC Office or DILG provincial/ city/municipal office.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT **COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS**

CAMARINES SUR III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(CASURECO III)
San Isidro, Iriga City
Fax No. (054) 299-2382

INVITATION TO BID

The Camarines Sur III Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CASURECO III) per requisite of Coop policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards invites all interested Bidders/Suppliers to apply for pre-qualification/eligibility and to bid for the Supply of:

A. **2,000 units of KWH METER (VAT inclusive)**
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B. **ELECTRICAL MATERIALS:**

1) Duplex wire # 6	10,000 mtrs.
2) Duplex Wire # 2	2,000 mtrs.
3) TW Wire # 8	8 rolls
C. **Plastic Seal (Security seal)**	10,000 pcs.
D. **Plastic box**	10,000 pcs.
E. **Wood Screw 1/2x8**	10 gross (box)

Submission of Pre-Qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 PM on October 11, 2007 and no documents shall be accepted thereafter Only those who will be qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding

BIDDING will be conducted at 1:00 pm on October 12, 2007. Pre-bid conference will be on October 11, 2007 @ 1:00 pm coop function room. Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE on or before 1:00 PM of October 12, 2007. Five (5%) percent Bidders bond is required as a matter of policy, non-refundable bidding fee of P3,000.00.

CASURECO III reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein, or accept any bid or offer which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to CASURECO III.

(Sgd.) **JOCELYN A. ORCINE**
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **ENGR. PEDRO M. PRESTADO, JR.**
General Manager

(PDI – September 24 & 28, 2007)

City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA invites PhilGEPS registered suppliers/manufacturer/contractors to apply for the following items:

Name of Project	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date /Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1. Improvement of Farm-to-Market Road at Curuan-Lunday Road, Curuan	P6,950,000.00	Oct. 17, 2007 10:00 AM	Oct. 29, 2007 10:00 AM	P 3,000.00

The Bid documents shall be available at the City Mayor's Office, Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division, City Hall, Zamboanga City starting October 3-15, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid conference shall be held at **City Engineer's Office, Conference Hall, City Hall, Zamboanga City.**

The Bidder shall drop and enclose the original of the Technical Proposal in one sealed envelope, whereas, the original of the Financial Proposal shall be enclosed in another sealed envelope. Both envelopes shall then be placed in another single envelope. In the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, plese call the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division at Telephone No. (062) 992-7763.

The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) DR. MARIO D. ARRIOLA
BAC Chairman

(PDI – September 24, 2007)

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Bring personally or fax your bio-data at 02-4251762 with 1 passport size picture to our local booking office: Human Resource Manager 947 EDSA, Philam Homes, Quezon City (Near MRT North Station accross Trinoma Mall) on Monday & Tuesday, Sept. 24 & 25, 2007 from 10 am to 5 pm ONLY).

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Housing Authority (NHA), through the Bids and Awards Committee invites geodetic engineers/consultants who have completed similar projects as described in Work Desdription and registered with G-EPs to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following project:

Name of Project/Location	ABC (P)/ Source of Funds	Duration (cal. days)	Work Description
Boundary, Topographic, Structural, and Subdivision Survey, Titling for CAA Compound, Phase 3-C and Issuance of Special Patent Titles and Original Certificate of Title for Lot 9, PSU-127179 (Phase 2) and Gap Portion (between CAA Phase 3A & 3C), Las Piñas, Metro Manila	4,690,915.40 (Corporate Receipts)	300	Boundary, Topographic, structural and subdivision surveys with titling and issuance of special patents

Checklist of requirements for eligibility is available for examination upon submission of a letter of intent addressed to the BAC Chairperson and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P300.00 at the BAC Secretariat Office, 3F NHA Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City. The Secretariat may be contacted at Tel. Nos. 929-8016 & 926-5816.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184. The bidders shall be evaluated/shortlisted based on applicable experience, qualification of personnel, current workload relative to capacity and financial capability. The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants consisting of seven (7) consultants from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible. Only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. The contract will be awarded to the Bidder with the Highest Rated and Responsive Bid who will be determined as such during post-qualification. The bidding shall follow the quality-cost based evaluation process.

TOR and bid documents will be available to shortlisted bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee of P3,000.00. The mode of payment is in cash.

Bid security shall be in the form of cash, manager's check and cashier's check only.

The schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
Deadline of submission of LOIs/ issuance of eligibility documents	October 2, 2007
Submission/Opening of eligibility documents	October 3, 2007 not later than 10:00 a.m. at the Operation Center, 3F NHA Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City
Shortlisting of Consultants	October 4-8, 2007
Issuance of TOR/bid documents	October 9-15, 2007
Pre-bid Conference	October 16, 2007, 10:00 a.m. at the NHA Operation Center
Submission of bids	October 30, 2007, not later than 10:00 a.m. at the NHA Operation Center
Opening of technical proposals	Immediately after the deadline of submission of bids
Opening of financial proposals	Shall be announced through notices

The NHA reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) FROILAN R. KAMPITAN
Assistant General Manager/Chairperson, BAC

(PDI - Sept. 24, 2007)

SULTAN KUDARAT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat
Tels: 064-200-3155/4050; 064-477-0326; Fax: 064-200-3156

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Sultan Kudarat Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SUKELCO) invites Sealed Bids from Eligible Bidders for different projects funded under approved NEA loan:

1. System upgrading at Municipality of Isulan, Kwh Meters relocation with maximum material cost of P11,246,921.69.

Condition:
Full delivery of materials

Terms of payment:
Three equal installment within 90 days.
1st installment upon delivery
2nd installment after 60 days
Full payment

Interested eligible bidders may obtain additional information and inspect Bidding Documents at the office of the ISD Manager/BAC Chairman Guia R. Victorio.

Bidding Documents may be purchased starting September 26, 2007 by an interested Eligible Bidder to the BAC Chairman and upon payment of Non-refundable pay of P3,500.00.

Sealed envelopes containing the technical and financial proposals in separate envelopes duly marked as such will be received by the BAC at the Board Room on or before 10:00 a.m. on October 12, 2007 at which time and place the technical proposals will be opened and evaluated. The financial proposals of bidders found eligible to bid will then be opened and read in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend, otherwise, they will be returned unopened to ineligible bidders.

A pre-bid conference will be held on October 2, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. at the Board Room.

All bids submitted must be accompanied by a bid security, in cash or cashier's check, in the amount equivalent to 2.5% of the amount of bid. This bid security shall be valid at least 150 days starting from the date of bid opening.

The Sultan Kudarat Electric Cooperative, Inc. hereby reserves the right to reject any of all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects of infirmities therein and to accept such bid as may considered most advantageous to the cooperative.

(Sgd.) **GUIA R. VICTORIO**
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **DEMETRIO O. JEREZ, PEE**
General Manager

(PDI - Sept. 19 & 24, 2007)

ANNOUNCEMENT

ATTENTION ALL INP RETIREES

In connection with the Supreme Court decision declaring that INP retirees are entitled to the same retirement benefits accorded upon PNP retirees, all INP retirees are advised to personally register and submit documentary requirements listed hereunder to facilitate processing of pension adjustments.

a) Retirement Orders
b) Service Record
c) Death Certificate (if subject INP retirees is already deceased)
d) Marriage Contract issued by NSO
e) 3 pcs 2x2 colored picture
f) Photocopy of 2 valid ID's
g) Certificate of Monthly Pension from GSIS

All physically handicapped applicants for pension adjustment may submit documents thru mail or an authorized representative together with additional requirements such as SPA, recent picture showing latest newspaper on foreground, endorsement from Police Regional Office where he/she resides and Joint Certification of Chief of Police and Local Chief Executive of INP status and present circumstances of retiree or transferee.

Submit ASAP indicating in the folders the
PERMANENT ADDRESS and CONTACT NUMBERS to:

Benefits and Pension Administration Division (BPAD)
ATTN: Pension Section
DPRM Annex Bldg.
Camp Crame, Quezon City

Note: INP Retirees - are those INP Police who retired from the PC/INP in 1990 and backwards.
For inquiries CALL: (02) 723-0401 locals 4448/4538/4348/4352

NOTICE OF LOSS

This is to inform the public that FinSource Inc. (A Teletech Company) lost the following:

1) Unused Acknowledgement Receipts with serial no. 33113-33150 had been lost on August 24, 2007
2) Unused Acknowledgement Receipts with serial no. 32219-32250 was declared lost on August 15, 2007

Any transactions using such receipts are herewith invalidated and shall not be honored/recognized by the company.

(PDI–Sept. 24, 2007)

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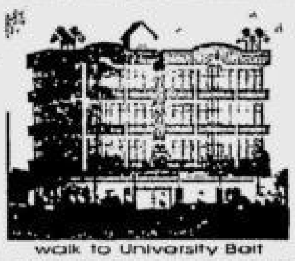

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Capt. Norberto E. Tapia has transferred his shares in Net Ship Management Inc. to Elena Y. Tapia. This notice is given to comply with the rules and regulations of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

(PDI – September 24, 2007)

More Classified Ads

PEZA	A33
Manila North Tollways Corporation	A34
PhilHealth	A34

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2007 hands-on choral workshop at the CCP

THE CULTURAL CENTER of the Philippines is now accepting applications for the 2007 Hands-on Choral Workshop, which will be held on October 23-27, 2007 (Tuesday-Saturday) from 9 AM to 5 PM in various venues of the CCP.

The Workshop is an intensive choral clinic open to amateur choirs and conductors who wish to develop their skills in choral singing, conducting and performance. The Workshop trainors are members and alumni of the world renowned Philippine Madrigal Singers. The Workshop sessions include vocalization techniques, sectional rehearsals, conducting techniques for conductors, individual choir sessions, note reading sessions and plenary sessions. This year's Workshop shall include a festival component, which it is implementing for the first time.

Registered choir participants and possibly other invited choirs shall render performances in different CCP venues in the afternoon and evening, within the 5-day period. Its culminating concert will be held at the CCP Main Theater on Saturday, Oct. 27 at 3:30 PM. This highly regarded annual Workshop has produced winners in local and international choral competitions.

Due to the very limited slots available, registration will be on a first-come-first-served basis.

For more information call the CCP Music Division at 832-2314 (direct line) or 8321125 loc. 1604/1605.

For your Classified Ads requirements, call our Classifieds Advertising Hotlines:

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892-5578; 811-4361;
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Kalaw:
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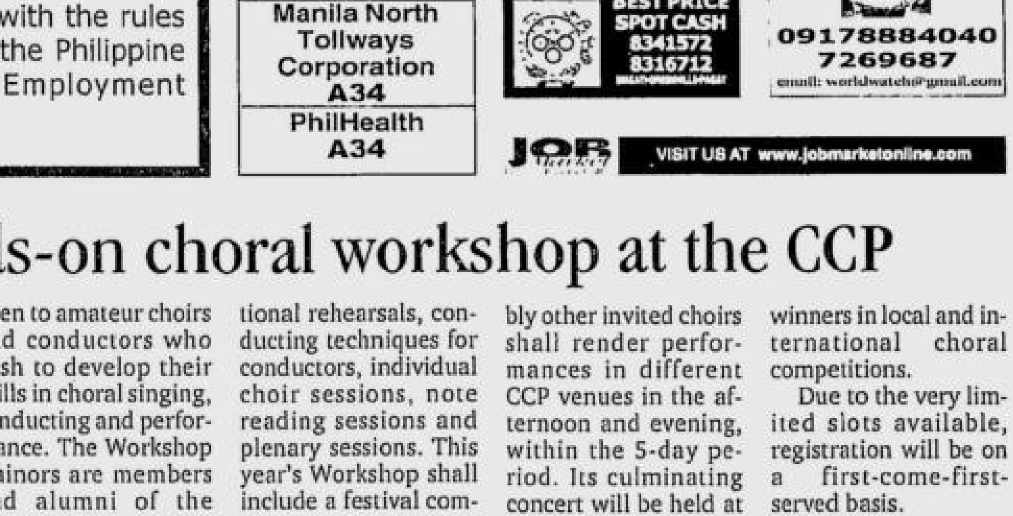
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SERVICE CONTRACTING FORUM
Philippines Association of Local Service Contractors, Inc, (Palscon) has recently concluded their Service Contracting Forum, on Dole Department Circular No. 01-07 "Clarifying the Applicability of DO-18-02 series of 2002 to Cooperatives" on Aug. 23 at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City. Shown in photo, (from left) Director Rebecca C. Chato of Bureau of Labor Relations-Dole, (sitted) Lawyer Emerico De Guzman, Sr. Partner, ACCRA Law Offices, Grace Abella Zata, Corporate Executive Search and Palscon P.R.O and (standing) Lawyer Giovanni H. Melgar, Wizard Manpower and Allied Services, Inc and Palscon president.

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BUSINESS

Japan's Marubeni, Kanematsu seen vying for PNOC-EDC stake

Four groups submitted letters of intent to bid

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT'S 60-PERCENT STAKE in PNOC Energy Development Corp., which is being offered for sale to private groups, has so far attracted at least five prospective bidders, including Japanese conglomerates Marubeni and Kanematsu.

Government sources privy to the PNOC-EDC privatization efforts said Marubeni and Kanematsu were among the four groups that had submitted letters of intent to participate in the Nov. 21 bidding for the PNOC-EDC stake.

The two others were local power generation firms First Generation Holdings and Basic Energy Corp.

Sources said the Cebu-based Aboitiz group, which is into power generation, was also keen on the PNOC-EDC stake but it was not known if it was able to submit an LOI.

Interested bidders are given until Oct. 5 to submit pre-qualification requirements. A pre-bid conference was scheduled for today.

The government's remaining stake in PNOC-EDC, a subsidiary of Philippine National Oil Co., consists of 6 billion common and 7.5 billion preferred shares currently valued at about P37-P38 billion at the stock market.

"But the buyer will have to pay a premium for the controlling stake," a source said.

The privatization of the government's remaining stake in PNOC-EDC is expected to be completed by end-November this year.

Other sources said PNOC-EDC's expertise in geothermal resource development especially in this regime of skyrocketing oil prices was very attractive to local and foreign investors.

In compliance with Constitutional restrictions on land ownership and on the development and utilization of natural resources under Philippine laws, only Philippine nationals can qualify to bid for the stake.

The prequalification requirements released by PNOC indicated that while foreign and local parties may initially prequalify, they are required to form consortia with Philippine nationals to be able to participate in the bidding.

Last week, Basic Energy Corp. disclosed that it had submitted its letter of intent to join the bidding for PNOC-EDC.

In July this year, the government raised P17.1 billion from the sale of P3 billion shares of PNOC's geothermal unit.

Alcantaras to build 200-MW coal-fired plant

THE ALCANTARA GROUP OF Companies is going to put up a 200-MW coal-fired power plant in Southern Mindanao as it anticipates a looming power shortage in the Mindanao Grid.

Tomas I. Alcantara, chair of the Alcantara Group, told the Mindanao Business Conference held in General Santos City on Saturday that the plant would be built by Alsons Consolidated Resouces Inc. (ACR) and its partners.

The power plant will have an initial capacity of 200 MW, which can be expanded up to 900 MW in 200-300MW increments to keep in step with the growth of the Mindanao economy.

The plant will be equipped with the latest environmental protection technology and will be fueled by clean coal from Kalimantan and, if it becomes economically available, local coal.

"This power station will serve the requirements of Mindanao's distribution utilities, particularly those in the south, as well as those of the various industrial loads. It will be the cheapest new entrant in the grid when it becomes operational in 2011," Alcantara said before business executives and investors attending the conference.

The project is expected to break ground next year and will be operational by the last quarter of 2011.

"Since the new power plant will be located in Southern Mindanao, it will fortify and stabilize the Mindanao grid, making this part of the island less susceptible to line disturbances similar to what we experienced last Monday," Alcantara said.

On Sept. 17, 2007, the Mindanao Grid suffered day-long outages blacking out urban areas like Davao City and the Socksargen.

Power generators urged to use more local coal

By Abigail L. Ho

AS PRICES OF IMPORTED COAL continue to escalate, power generators should consider getting more of their coal requirements from local mines, which have the potential to produce 1,000-2,000 megawatts of power for at least 25 years.

In a presentation during the PowerTrends 2007 exhibition and conference last week, energy industry veteran and MG Mining and Energy Corp. vice chair Rufino Bomasang said power generators could tap new technology to enable them to use lower quality Philippine coal in their operations.

The added cost that would be incurred in using such new technology, he said, could be offset by the savings they would generate by the increased use of local coal.

He said that in other countries, conventional pulverized coal-fired power plants were already using low-rank coal, some of which had much lower heating value than local coal.

Fluidized bed technologies, he said, enabled the use of a wide range of coal types.

Right now, he said only Semirara Mining Corp. had mines big enough to supply the requirement of major coal-fired plants.

Semirara produces about 3 million metric tons of coal each year.

Outside of Semirara, Bomasang said there were many other areas in the country that had potential reserves enough to supply the requirements of major power plants in the country for the next 25 years.

These deposits can be found in Isabela (lignite) with a potential of 150-300 MW; Cagayan (lignite), 100 MW; Surigao Del Sur (lignite and sub-bituminous), 300 MW; South Cotabato (sub-bituminous), 300-900 MW, and Zamboanga Sibugay (bituminous), 200 MW.

Burger King posts profit

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

FAST FOOD CHAIN BURGER King has reported modest profit from June to August, reversing losses incurred in the same period last year, BK Titans part owner Wilson Young said.

Perf Restaurants Inc. (Perf) is the local franchisee of BK (Burger King) Asiapac Pte. Ltd., which holds the master franchise in Asia Pacific.

Perf is indirectly controlled by BK Titans Inc., led by former Customs Commissioner Alberto V. Lina , telecommunications tycoon Manuel V. Pangilinan and Tanduay Holdings president Wilson Young in their personal capacities.

Other investors in BKT include Airfreight president Angelito Alvarez, and Philippine Basketball Association chair Victorico Vargas.

Data from the company showed that average daily sales in August grew 23 percent to P64,581 from P52,425. This was an improvement from July's P61,598 and year-ago's P52,562.

For June, the average daily sales grew 8 percent to P60,008, from P55,780 in the same month last year.

"I think the turnaround was due to our re-imaging, and the addition of coffee and desserts in the product line," Young said.

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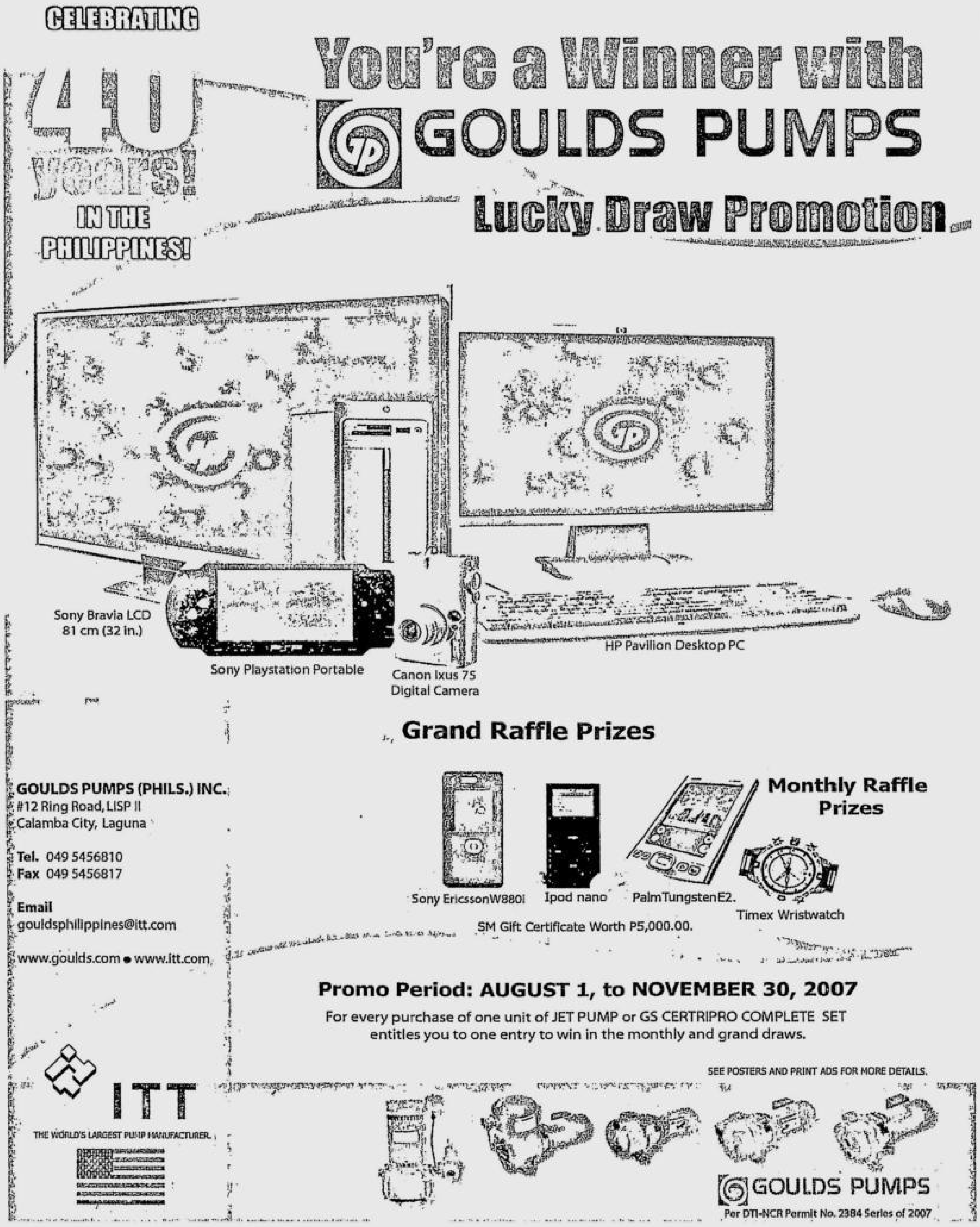
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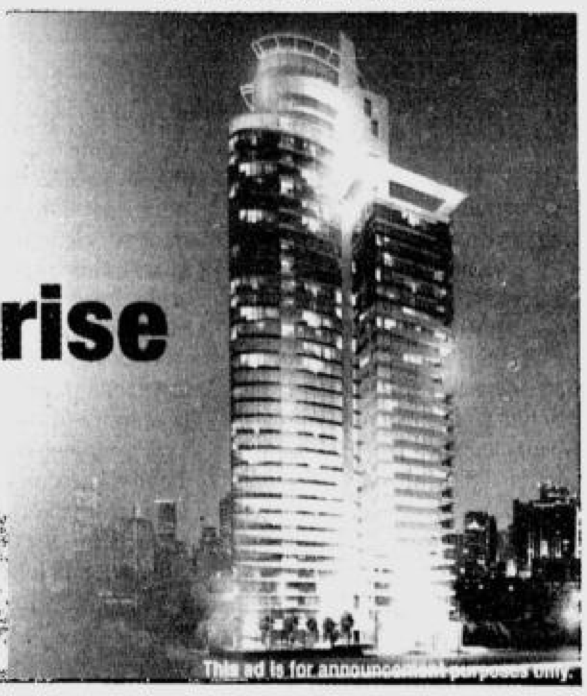
BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino



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Jeweler romances the stones

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IN THE MYSTERIOUS AND GLAMOROUS world of jewelry, the 3Rs are not as important as the 3Cs—carat, color and clarity.

And when it comes to these three words that set the standards for the ancient industry, 35-year-old Turkish businessman Sinan Batur is something of an expert.

Batur has been developing this expertise since childhood. He grew up hearing passionate discussions about the virtues of the diamond, emerald and ruby.

His family has been in the jewelry trade for 80 years and Batur is determined to continue the tradition.

"I have always had an eye for fashion, ever since I was a little boy, and precious stones fascinate me," says Sinan, who started as a cleaner in a jewelry shop when he was 11.

Dazzled

The jewelry trade dazzled Sinan so much that he studied gemology in Belgium, one of the centers of the global diamond trade, to arm himself with the technical skills he needed to run his own jewelry business.

Sinan struck out on his own when he was just 20, setting up his first shop at the Grand Bazaar in Turkey with seven people, then expanding to the United States and other parts of Europe.

His workforce has since expanded to 135. He recently opened a factory in Italy. Sinan's unique jewelry now grace windows of jewelry shops in Belgium, Germany, Lebanon, Dubai, Singapore, Japan, Vietnam, and then, the Philippines.

He first came here in 1996, but it was only in December 2004 when he opened the first branch of his Mod Milano at the Gateway Mall, Araneta Center.

Business instinct

It was not only love—his wife is a Filipina—that brought him to the Philippines, which he considers his second home, but also his instinct for business.

He says the Philippines is a good place to invest in because there's so much room for growth.

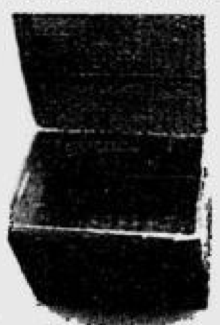
"The Philippines is one of the best places

JEWELER/ B2-3

> 'Out of 1,000 stones, only 2 are really good'

SINAN BATUR

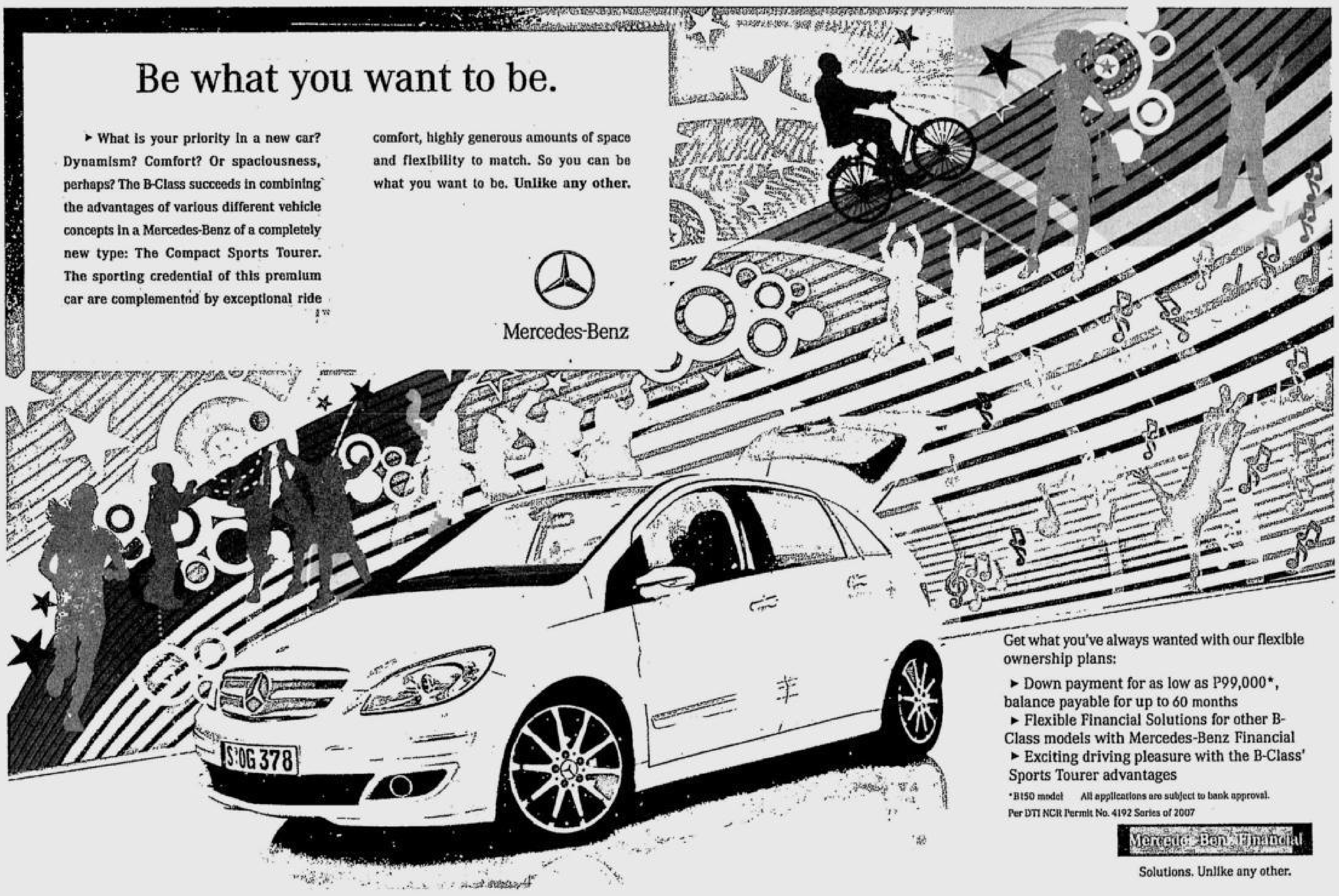
IN THIS ISSUE



Seagrass weavers build own niche in export market /B2-4

Poverty alleviation through taxation /B2-3

Marikina shoes get a new shine /B3-3



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Per DTI NCR Permit No. 4192 Series of 2007

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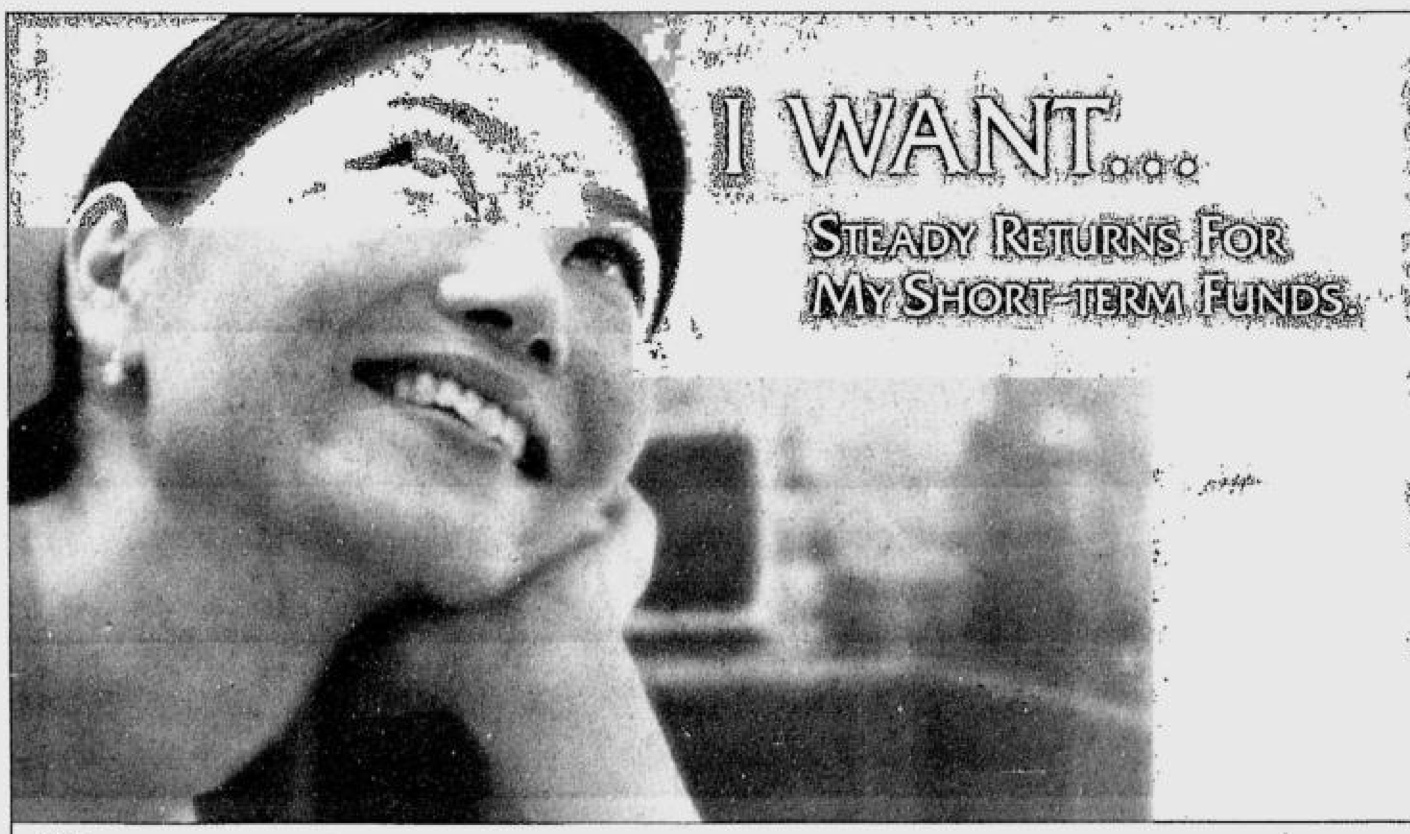

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(1) The BPI Investment Funds are collective investment vehicles in which funds of various investors are invested by a professional fund manager in a diversified portfolio of high-grade securities based on the Fund's pre-determined investment objective.
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GOINGS-ON

'Go Four It' bags prize

STUDENTS from the University of the Philippines-Diliman once again soared above other schools at the Strategic Marketing Competition recently held at the Araneta Coliseum, Quezon City. With their tactical marketing concept for Taco Bell, a restaurant devoted to serving Filipino' palettes with Mexican cuisine, Ma. Theresa Ajon, Christine Anacay, Kriselda Celina Cabrera, Carmie Rome Cargo, Marlowe Emmanuel Javier, Luis Diego Lee, Nary Ann Therese Lorenzana, Delbert Stanley Ty, supervised by Ben Paul Gutierrez and Raymund William Acedera, wowed the entire audience. Highlighting the four Mexican flavors that Taco Bell's Buritos takes great pride in, the marketing plan dubbed "Go Four It" equated the snack to teen spirit. Besting 31 other entries from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, the teams from the University of Santo Tomas, Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University-Manila and Southville Foreign Colleges also made it to the finals. A competition for students where Philippine Marketing Association (PMA) once again put young minds to test, StratMark gave students the opportunity to test their grit on mutual alertness, strategic thinking, creative abilities, and verbal skills.

Starbucks opens center

STARBUCKS, through its Project SparkHope, recently inaugurated a daycare center in Barangay San Isidro, Cataingan, Masbate. Starbucks did the project jointly with Unicef Philippines with assistance from the province's local government.

Masbate is one of the least developed provinces in the country. Located south of Metro Manila, it's been experiencing social problems.

More so, San Isidro is one of the more isolated barangays wherein resources for learning have a lot of room for upgrading. This is what pushed Project SparkHope to work with Unicef, teacher volunteers and local barangay officials to help expand the opportunities for education in the area.

Sun Life sets campaign

SUN LIFE Financial Philippines (SLFP) has launched a marketing education campaign called "Luv Vul" which traveled the whole country through Flight VUL 2007. VUL stands for Variable Universal Life (VUL), a product that combines insurance policies and investment fund components, ensuring protection for any untoward incidents while taking advantage of market growth potentials. "We want to promote our VUL intensively this year as we know the benefits it can bring to Filipinos, allowing them to enjoy not only life security and protection but also the opportunity to make their money grow through various investment instruments that give high returns," said Sun Life president and CEO Henry Joseph Herrera.

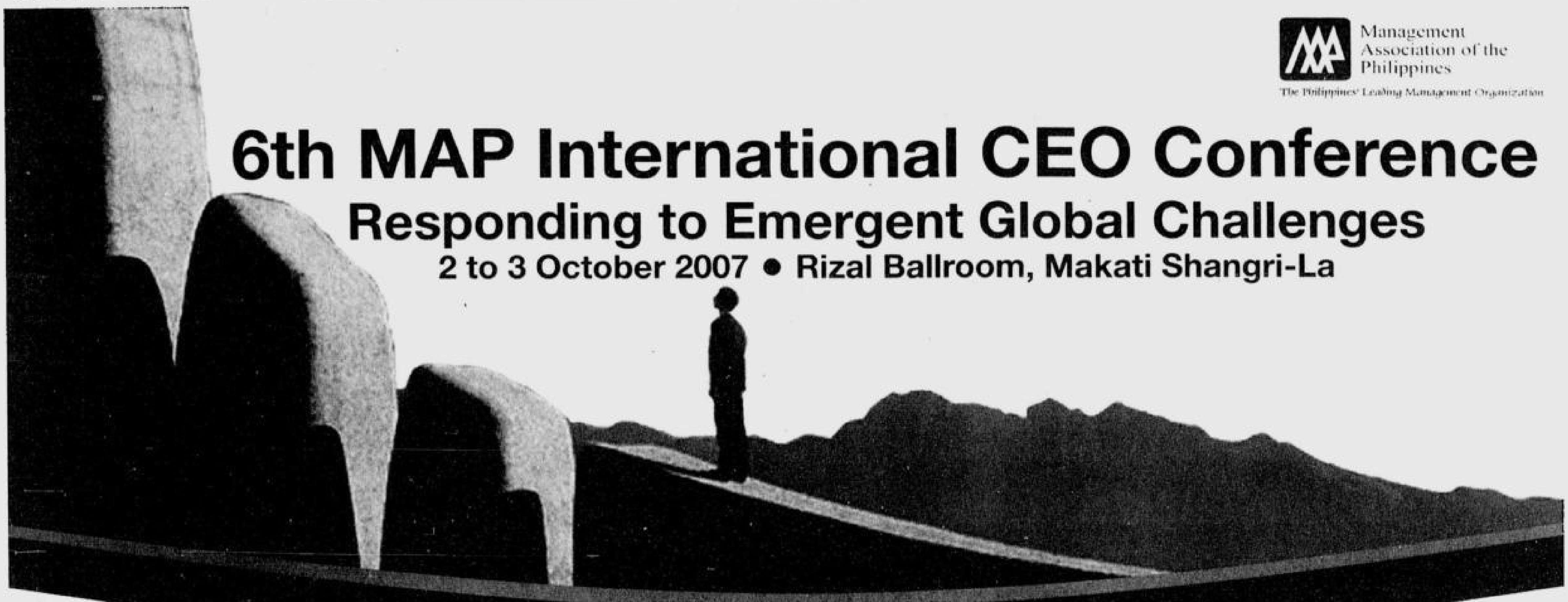
Lafayette to meet dues

LAFAYETTE is ready to pay more if Congress decides to raise taxes on mining companies.

"Ever since we took over the management of the Rapu Rapu polymetallic project in January 2006, we have always complied with all laws—on taxes and the environment," said Bayani Agabin, company spokesman.

He said the company was mandated by law to explore its mining area in accordance with the exploration work program under its mineral agreement.

The project pumps about P320 million each year in and around Rapu-Rapu in the form of salaries and wages and purchase of goods and services, creating new jobs and businesses in the process which results in additional taxes as well.



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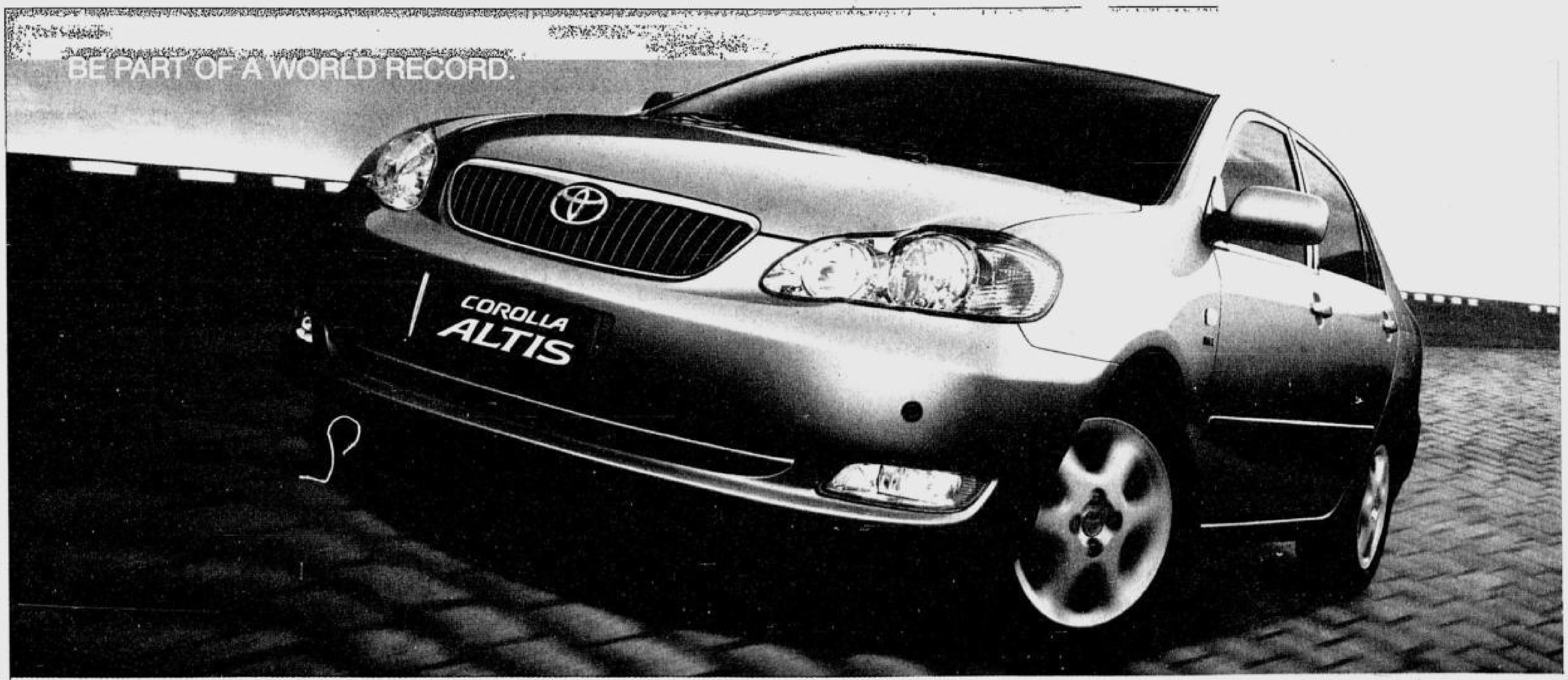

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TOYOTA
moving forward

Poverty alleviation through taxation

(Second of two parts)

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Tammy H. Lipana

THROUGH THE PAYBIR SERvice, taxpayers may now pay their tax of P10,000 and below through a simple text message.

The PAYBIR project was forged in partnership with Land Bank of the Philippines as the accredited agent bank, and Globe Telecom acting as taxpayer agent by using its G-Cash facility to make tax payments on behalf of its subscribers.

Data sharing between BIR and other government agencies, such as the Bureau of Customs, Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Board of Investments, Register of Deeds and local government units has enabled the verification of revenue or income declarations, tax payments and tax returns filed.

Industry benchmarking and taxpayers profiling is a program to test the reasonableness of the tax declarations and payments made by taxpayers by comparing them with the performance of the other taxpayers in the same industry.

Other initiatives

Those whose tax declarations and payments fall below the industry benchmark are subjected to priority tax audits.

The Department of Finance has introduced several commendable initiatives to address tax evasion and corruption, as follows:

1. The Run After Tax Evaders (RATE) is a program initiated by the Department of Finance and the BIR to investigate and prosecute individuals and/or entities involved in tax evasions and other criminal violations of the NIRC.

A number of tax evasion cases have been filed by the BIR against certain companies and prominent personalities, including an actor, top ranking military officer, professional athlete and medical practitioner.

2. The Run After Smugglers (RATS) is a counterpart program of the BOC aimed at running after suspected smugglers or importers who do not pay the appropriate customs duties and taxes.

3. The Revenue Integrity Protection Services (RIPS)—RIPS is an anticorruption program whereby the lifestyles of officials and employees of the DOF, BIR, BOC and other agencies under the DOF jurisdiction are checked against their earning capacity.

Unjustified accumulation of wealth and allegations of corrupt practices are investigated and, where appropriate, criminal, civil or administrative complaints are filed before the appropriate court or administrative body.

Last month, our firm was tasked by the DOF to conduct a crash course on Accounting and Auditing to RIPS examiners to prepare them for a two-week intensive training conducted by trainers from the US Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This demonstrates the government's seriousness in pursuing this anticorruption program.

The BIR also requires accreditation and registration of tax agents or practitioners to eliminate (but not kill) those who are not qualified to represent taxpayers before the BIR.

Any fraudulent acts by the tax agents or practitioners can result in the cancellation, suspension or revocation of their respective BIR certificate of accreditation, in addition to other stiff penalties.

Tax amnesty program

The current tax amnesty program was launched through Republic Act No. 9480, which emanated from a Tax bill, which lapsed into law on May 24, 2007.

This program is expected to expand the tax base and generate billions of pesos in potential revenues. Qualified taxpayers with tax assessments or potential tax liabilities or those who just want to buy peace of mind or avoid the hassles of tax investigations can avail of the tax amnesty by paying an amnesty tax.

In the case of individuals, they pay the equivalent of 5 percent of their net worth or P50,000, whichever is higher, or in the case of corporations, 5 percent of their net worth, or a specific amount ranging from P25,000 to P500,000, depending on their capitalization.

Proper availment of the tax amnesty will result in the cancellation of the taxpayer's tax assessments and exemption from tax investigations for 2005 and prior taxable years.

Revenue officers conduct tax mapping operations by visiting business establishments to perform on-the-spot verification of taxpayers' compliance with the registration requirements; validation of Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) information; authentication of receipts/invoices being issued; and validation of cash register machine registration.

Premyo sa Resibo (PSR)

"Premyo sa Resibo" or "PSR"—"I-text mo Resibo mo at Manalo ng Premyo"—This is a raffle of official receipts and invoices intended to help promote tax compliance and improve tax collection.

Through this raffle, the BIR is able to disclose business establishments which are not registered with the BIR or which use unregistered official receipts and invoices.

Taxation as a powerful tool

Clearly, the government has a very powerful tool that it can use to raise the poor from its plight. That tool is taxation.

There will always be challenges in its implementation, but there need only be a good partnership between the government and the taxpaying public to put all the mechanisms in place and ensure proper implementation.

First, to be a good partner, we must pay our correct taxes. Second, when all the sharing and allocations have been done, we must be vigilant in ensuring that our taxes go to the right places, to the right projects and to the right beneficiaries.

With a simple act as requiring official receipts for purchases or payments made, we are already helping government and those that benefit from the taxes get their fair share. In conclusion, by tax awareness, compliance and vigilance, we will be able to help the government in poverty alleviation.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is chair & senior partner of Isla Lipana & Co./PricewaterhouseCoopers. This article is an excerpt of a paper she delivered on Aug. 30, 2007 at the Inaugural Grand Academic Conference of Adamson University on the theme "Harnessing Advances in Science and Technology for Poverty Reduction." Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Jeweler romances the stones

From page B2-1

to invest in when you are in the jewelry business because there are a lot of things you can bring over here," he says.

Sinan explains that while Filipinos are no strangers to jewelry, he notes that the jewelry designs in the Philippines are decades behind the trends in other parts of the world.

He attributes this to the lack of choices in the country, minimal exposure to the latest in jewelry designs and dearth of knowledge of what makes good jewelry.

"Filipinos are generally not too advanced in terms of design," Sinan says. "Most do not know anything else except what their mothers and grandmothers had."

Differences

He also said that "not too many people know the differences between gems and precious stones."

"Pearls, for instance, are not all the same," he explains. "They are different."

Contemplating on the rarity and nuances of each and every gem stokes Sinan's passion for jewelry, which today is no different from the time he first laid eyes on a diamond.

"No stones are the same. They all have their characteristics, and it is hard to find a real good one," Sinan says. "Out of about 1,000 stones brought to me, I would say only two would end up being really good."

Customers will pay good money to get their hands on such rare treasure, and Sinan says it is also amazing that, in the jewelry business, prices—like beauty—are in the eye of the beholder.

"No one can really say why this gem is $1 or $1 million, why emeralds can be more expensive than diamonds," he says. "It really depends on how much people are willing to pay for them."

Personal ties

Sinan also thrives on the exclusivity of the jewelry business. He says there are very few players in the trade, and the rules are not set in stone. Rather, they are based on honesty.

"In Belgium, there are no receipts. I can get millions of dollars of stones without a receipt, but it is understood that if I don't pay, the entire industry will know about it," Sinan says. "The jewelry trade is all about personal relations."

He also says that money does not always talk in the jewelry business.

"Because of the rarity of the stones, it is a challenge to get the right one," he says. "Even if you have money, you can not say that I will have what I want tomorrow."

But more than the stones, the designs also affect the price, and Sinan is confident that his designs are among the most refreshing in the Philippine scene, if only because he gets Italian artisans—known for their flair for design—to put the gems under the best possible light.

Competitive advantage

Design plus the right stone spell Sinan's competitive advantage.

"There are a lot of jewelry shops, but I would like to think that we carry items that nobody else is carrying," he says. "Our pieces are one of a kind and we have a good variety of products."

Yes, they are not cheap—with "a really good piece of jewelry" starting at P50,000. But Sinan says that many Filipinos are starting to realize the value of getting a good piece of jewelry.

Like many jewelers, he likes diamonds, but Sinan says that emeralds are actually more expensive because it is harder to get hold of them.

Only fancy-colored diamonds—the pinks, blues and greens—can rival in price.

"Jewelry is very personal, and I always tell my customers that what they are really buying is a piece of art that they can actually wear," he says.

San Miguel taps PBA legends for new San Mig Coffee ad

FOOD AND BEVERAGE giant San Miguel Corp. launches its newest advertisement for San Mig Coffee 100% premium instant coffee, the kind made specifically for those who enjoy the full flavor of black coffee.

The campaign brings together long-missed legends in Philippine basketball to promote the stronger taste, richer aroma, and the value-for-money advantage of San Mig Coffee black coffee. Taking a break from the commercial shoot are (seated from left) Allan Caidic, Chito Loyzaga, Nerish Villegas, brand assistant-San Miguel Super Coffeemix; and Alvin Patrimonio with (standing from left) Hector Calma, commercial director Marian Basa, Justine Ferrer, Brand Associate-San Miguel Super Coffeemix; Samboy Lim and Peter Martin.

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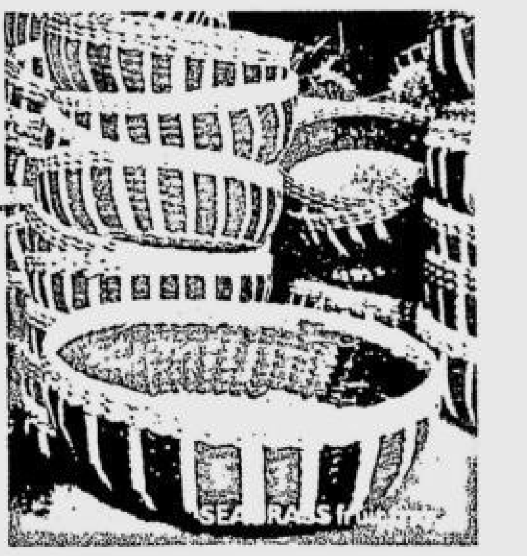


Sea grass weavers build own niche in export market

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LIBON, ALBAY—TURNING the seemingly unusable sea grass (Rhycospora Corymbosa) into profitable crafts has been a traditional home-based enterprise in Barangay Del Rosario in this town for many generations.

But how could humble workers with simple raw materials and only their bare hands as their tools create their own niche in the local and foreign markets?

Creativity and hard work are their only capital as they rely on government and nongovernment help to establish their business, attests Rey Seda, president of the Del Rosario Handicraft Producers Association (Delrohapa).

Locally known as the "*agas*" or "*ragiwdiw,*" the sea grass grows to about one meter high with distinctly triangular stems and leaves that are broad and long.

The sea grass can be found mostly in marshlands and rice paddies in Southern Luzon. It grows well in irrigated lands as when a rice paddy is left for fallowing.

Under the ingenious hands of Del Rosario's weavers, dried sea grass stalks and leaves are fashioned into baskets, hampers, boxes, containers, bags, place mats, bowls, floor mats, decors and other useful items.

Sea grass products from this town have already reached Italy, Canada, Thailand, Austria, New Zealand and other parts of Europe and the United States through exporters who ask the community crafts association to produce the products for them.

From individual family enterprises, sea grass-weaving became a communal industry with the rise of the Delrohapa in 1997.

Weaving tradition

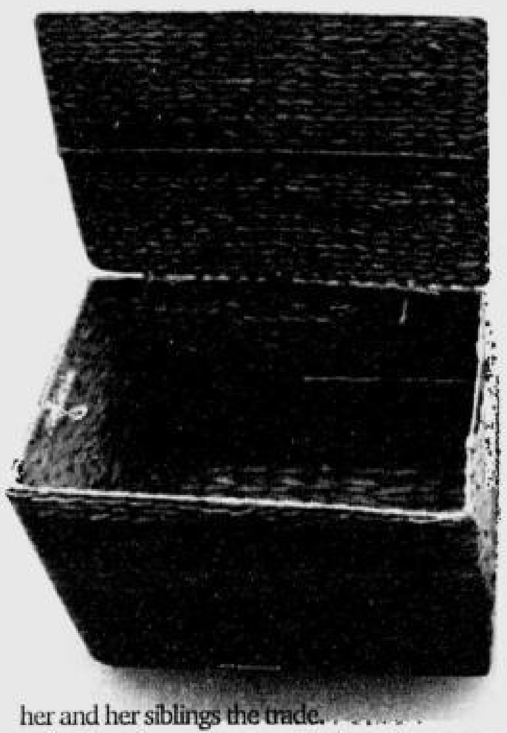
Seda, 41, recalls seeing his mother weave *agas* during his childhood years when the craft was a common form of livelihood for almost every family in the village.

Even though sea grass-weaving has evolved into a communal enterprise, weaving traditions in families has been preserved to this day.

Seda says that normally, in a household, women act as weavers while their husbands serve as gatherers of raw materials. Husbands usually have other forms of livelihood like farming and livestock raising.

Emalyn Sazon, 39, Delrohapa finance officer, started weaving when she was 12.

She says she learned *agas* weaving from her parents and elder siblings. Earnings from the sea grass craft help her send her three children to school.



Sazon adds she has passed on the skill of weaving to her children just as her parents taught her and her siblings the trade.

In the village, raw materials and woven sea grass items are queued on roadsides for drying while housewives weave right in their homes or would meet in groups to weave with other housewives to enjoy a good conversation.

Still existing

In 1997, the municipal government and the regional Department of Trade and Industry saw the market potentials of the sea grass products in Libon.

They organized village-based cooperatives, one of which was the Delrohapa, and gave them technical inputs on how to improve and market their products.

Now, only the Delrohapa of 57 members exists while the other cooperatives in other villages have been dissolved.

Seda recalls that many associations were formed before the Delrohapa, but all failed due to mismanagement.

"The people at that time lost confidence in the associations being formed and chose to work independently without any affiliation."

Around 70 percent of the weaving households in Barangay Del Rosario are members of the existing association.

The Delrohapa is a member of the Community Crafts Association of the Philippines Inc. (CCAP), a nongovernment association that uses development marketing as a socioeconomic development intervention.

Providing its affiliates with purchase orders from domestic and foreign markets, CCAP is one of the established domestic buyers of sea grass products from Del Rosario.

Biggest earnings

The Delrohapa recorded its biggest earnings this year from the association's first purchase order of P6,000.

FOR THE weavers, quality is always more important than quantity.

Seda says that in the first two quarters of 2007 alone, from January to July, they already have a total of P1.5-million purchase orders from different buyers combined.

He recalls that in 2005, the association earned a total of P100,000 and in 2006, P300,000.

"Our annual income would depend on samples we created the previous year. The designs are usually prescribed by potential buyers."

In 2004, their designs failed to meet the requirement of the buyers and caused a decline in sales the following year but this did not deter the Delrohapa weavers.

This all the more inspired the weavers to improve the quality of their work by implementing quality control measures. "We learned that quality is always more important than quantity," says Seda.

He says they thoroughly screen the finished products being submitted by the weavers.

Dried stalks and leaves are fashioned into baskets, hampers, boxes

Direct export potential

Prices of sea grass products vary depending on the size and design.

Small and simple boxes and place mats can be bought for as low as P5 each. Floor mats that are 124 centimeters by 122 centimeters in size are worth at least P250 while bigger sizes and more complicated designs are worth up to P1,500.

The most marketable products are hampers and laundry boxes.

In 2004, the Delrohapa through the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) received a grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (Cida) to fund the installation of facilities and buy production tools.

This was used to help "what was once a poor association without capital and enough means to expand business," according to Cynthia Olaguer, business development division chief of DTI-Albay.

The DTI is now slowly implementing a development plan for the sea grass industry in Libon with the goal of increased production and market expansion.

Rodrigo Aguilar, assistant regional director of DTI-Bicol and concurrent provincial director of DTI-Albay, says that DTI will continue to give technical inputs to the cooperative to make them fit for direct export. "They must continually work on new designs, improve the quality of their work and increase their workforce."

Libon is a second class Albay municipality with a population of 66,213 people in 12,572 households. It is regionally known as the "Rice Granary of Albay" but it has identified sea grass as its town product.

Devastated farming villages cash in on VCO

By Jaymee T. Gamil
Inquirer Southern Luzon

TIWI, ALBAY—DESPITE THE setbacks caused by the consecutive typhoons last year, the coconut farmers of Barangay Bariis and other upland villages here are finally off to an entrepreneurial venture of their own.

Last year, the Tiwi Coconut Farmers Association (TCFA) was set to open a communal coco coir processing plant as part of the livelihood program initiated by the multisector organization Tiwi Cooperation for Research and Development.

Chevron Geothermal Philippines Holdings Inc., which runs an energy plant in the municipality, earmarked a P250,000 grant as initial capital for the coco center.

The farmers of the remote hilly area were poised to stand firmly on their own feet. But nature seemed to have other plans. The super typhoons that lashed the region last year denuded their coconut farms, robbing them of their raw material and their budding plans for a stable livelihood.

Despite the loss, however, the TCFA knew it had to go on. "The funds were ready. We couldn't let them go to waste," TCFA president Vedasto Cerio said.

Cerio added that they even already had the venue for operation, referring to the Bariis Multi-Purpose Center donated by the Department of Agrarian Reform.

With the assistance of the Aquinas Foundation Inc., a nongovernment organization founded by the same Dominican university in Legazpi City, the livelihood program was reoriented from coco coir processing to virgin coconut oil (VCO) production.

The AQFI not only provided the means to acquire the coconuts needed but also drew up the preliminary marketing plan and budget allocation for the community's new business.

The Chevron grant was used largely to acquire a mechanical shredder, coconut milk extractor and purifier.

The remaining funds were used to buy containers and construct a fermentation room.

These new acquisitions were subjected to a test-run at the start of the month at the Bariis Multi-purpose Center, much to the excitement of the residents who milled around the facility to watch.

High value

Compared to other coconut products, VCO ensures high compensation even with meager resources, which is essential, since coconuts are still in low supply in the Bicol Region after the typhoons last year.

"Raw material processing and handicraft-making are the staple ventures in rural areas, but right now, it is important that our farmers aim for higher value products," said Luisa Marcelo, AQFI project manager.

VCO is commonly sold in the market as a natural health supplement and as cosmetics, such as soaps, massage ointments and aromatherapy oils.

JOYCE Clutario of AQ Pharmacy in Bonot, Legazpi City shows the massage and aromatherapy oils. PHOTOS BY NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER S. LUZON

According to engineer Emmanuel Raquid, technical staff member of the Aquinas Center for Community Extension Services, the Bariis facility is expected to produce 80 liters of VCO per day, to be priced at P150 per liter.

Primary buyer

The AQFI plans to be the facility's primary buyer and marketer.

Currently, they sell the VCO produced by a fledgling cooperative in Sangay, Camarines Sur.

The AQFI has started a line of massage and aromatherapy oils from the produce, marketing them for P100 to P150 per 100 ml bottle at the Our Lady of Manaoag Church in Pangasinan City, as well as the Aquinas Pharmacy branches in Legazpi City and Naga City.

Raquid said the AQFI looks to churches, particularly those that are Dominican-run, as the primary outlets for the VCO products.

'Recycled' resources

However, Raquid lamented that the market is currently limited to the local arena.

"To provide for an international market, we need 3,000 to 5,000 metric tons of VCO," he said.

This is a tall order, considering 800 coconuts a day are already needed to meet the 80-liter-per-day target at the Bariis facility.

"The Manaoag friars have been asking us for more VCO products, because they say there is an increasing demand for them. But we can't do anything but to ask them to wait," Raquid cited.

He foresaw that shortages would worsen in the near future.

Recycling coconuts

The AQFI compensates by "recycling" the coconuts they acquire, mostly from the Philippine Coconut Authority.

"We aid in other coconut-based social enterprises in other areas, one of which is a coco coir production facility in the Sorsogon province. The farmers there only strip off the husks but leave the coconut intact. When they are done, we pass the nuts to the Bariis facility for VCO production," said Raquid.

To further utilize the versatile coconut, he said they were encouraging farmers to make use of the discarded husks and meat for additional skills and income.

"The husks can be made into fertilizer, or turned into accessories. The meat could be dried, pulverized, then turned into coco flour," he said.

Social enterprise

The Bariis VCO facility is planned to be formally launched this month and will be directly benefited from, and operated by, the TCFA under the guidance of their multisector donors.

According to Cerio, the association currently has 32 members, all of whom are small farmers coming from different villages across the municipality—Lourdes, Sogod, Joroan, Misibis, Mayong and Dapdap.

AROMATHERAPY oils sold at P100-P150 per 100ml bottle

However, he admitted that the association was still unregistered and that they were yet to organize into a cooperative, rendering them, for the meantime, ineligible for ownership, at least on paper.

"The facilities came before the association," he said, laughing.

He added he was thankful for the aid extended to them by the provincial and municipal governments, the DAR, the PCA, as well as AQFI and Chevron.

Raquid said even if the only ones to actually earn from the VCO facility were members of the association, the enterprise can create a ripple effect on the immediate community.

"The other residents in the community could buy the oil, then create and sell VCO products of their own," he pointed out, adding that in time, it could flourish into their own little businesses.

The AQFI has been planning to open another VCO processing facility in Daraga town.

"The bottom line of this venture is capability-building. What is important is that it empowers the grassroots and those that are in need," Raquid said.

BUSINESS Monday

PHOTOS BY NIÑA CATHERINE CALLEJA

Bee farm's museum 'stings' environment consciousness

By Niña Catherine Calleja and Maricar Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SILANG, CAVITE—HONEYBEE FARM owner Joel Magsaysay, 52, has put up a bee museum not only to show what it is like to live in the world of honeybees but also to make people more aware of their duty to protect the environment.

Structured like a beehive, the museum of Ilog Maria bee farm has been satisfying the curiosity of tourists and regular customers who, according to Magsaysay, are more interested in the bees and how they produce honey than seeing their products.

Ilog Maria is in Silang, Cavite, approximately 45 kilometers south of Manila.

Joel and his wife Violaine have been running the farm for 30 years now.

Bottled honey, cider vinegar, soaps, shampoo, massage oil, candles and fly repellent are just some of Ilog Maria's products.

Each handmade product contains ingredients from honey, pollen, propolis, bee's wax, bee venom or royal jelly.

Ilog Maria currently cultures around 3,000 European bees in the farm.

Field trip spot

The idea for the museum came to the Magsaysays a few years back when a friend, who owned a private school in Manila, asked them if a group of three- to four-year-old pupils could come to the farm to see the bees.

He approved the request and gave a lecture to the kids.

From then on, Magsaysay and Ilog Maria have played host to children from different schools.

Magsaysay said he and his wife put up the museum using the materials left over from the construction of their house.

It took them many years to finish construction, he noted, because they stopped whenever they ran out of funds.

They formally opened the museum only last year.

"It has always been my dream to build a place where kids would be able to see the beauty and wonders of nature," he said.

Magsaysay sees his museum as a form of public service.

Museum guests get to watch an 18-minute video, titled, "Natural Living in the World of Honey Bees," which answers questions like how the bees are cultured and how to harvest the honey.

Environment advocacy

The Magsaysay couple is also working on the video's second edition, which would tackle the most important global issue today—global warming or "global cooling" in Magsaysay's terminology.

Magsaysay said they are directly affected by climate change because their bees totally depend on flowers, which are vulnerable to changing climate conditions.

He used to be able to schedule the cycle of flowers, and even predict when flowers would bloom. With climate change, it is now becoming more difficult to do so.

"When you take care of bees, you take care of flowers. When taking care of flowers, you ensure the fertility of the soil. And in doing this, you must take care of the river. And taking care of river means caring for the air," he explained.

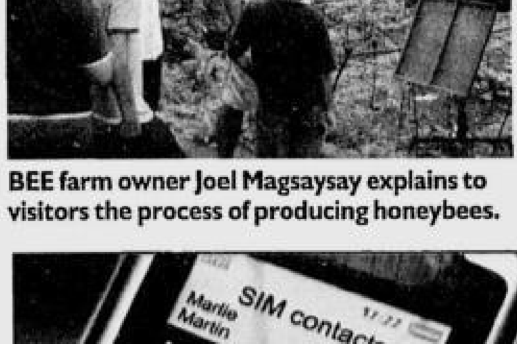
Taking care of the air, he said, is the most difficult because it always encompasses the whole environment.

It is a daunting challenge, but Magsaysay said that even though their effort is just a point in a blank paper, they still have the responsibility to remind people to take care of the environment.

"We don't expect them to be environmental activists after they leave here. We only want

BEE FARM'S/ B3-2

ILOG Maria healing massage oil



BEE farm owner Joel Magsaysay explains to visitors the process of producing honeybees.

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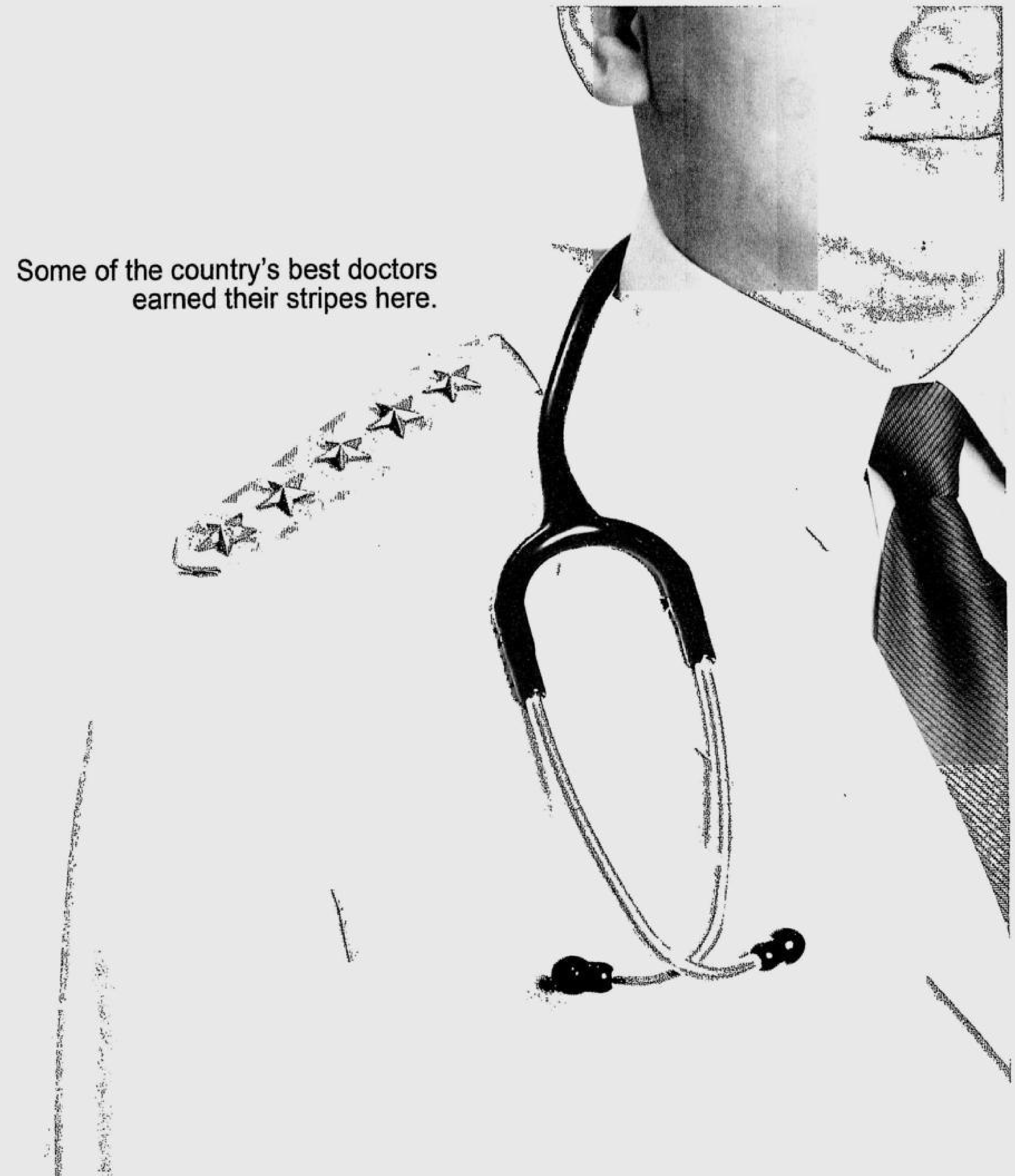

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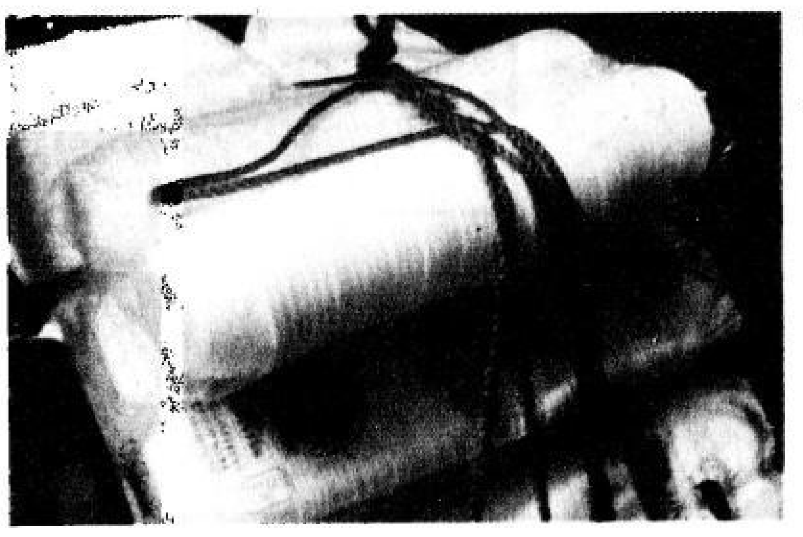
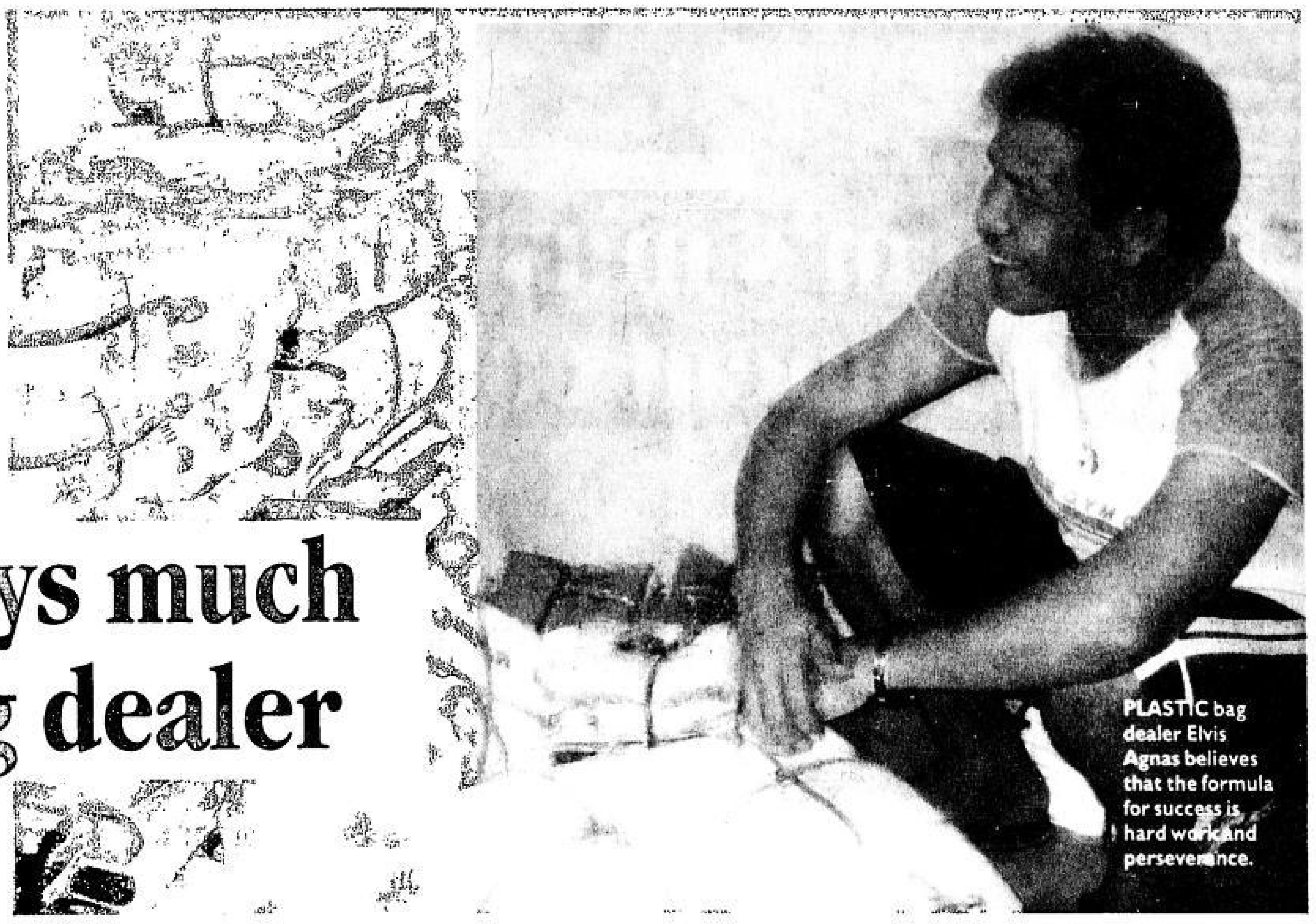


CUPS and containers made of styrofoams (polystyrene foams) stored at the warehouse of Elvis and Dulce



PLASTIC bag dealer Elvis Agnas believes that the formula for success is hard work and perseverance.

Simple life pays much for plastic bag dealer

Text and Photos
by Maricar Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—A combination of "*sipag at tiyaga*" (hard work and perseverance) is an already proven formula for success but for 41-year-old Elvis Agnas, coupling these traits with living a simple and humble life helped yield higher dividends.

In 1984, Elvis left Camarines Sur and took with him his hopes for a better life in the city.

He worked for his brother in Pasay, who was a plastic bag distributor at that time. As the delivery truck driver, Elvis remembered earning P1,200 a month.

But in 1991, with enough savings from his measly income, he and his wife decided to put up their own franchising business in San Pedro, Laguna.

Named Elvis&Dulce Poly Bag Dealer, the business distributes plastic bags as well as plastic cups, spoons and forks.

Their supply comes from Malinta and Divisoria, which they, in turn, deliver to market stalls, *sari-sari* stores or groceries in Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Antipolo, Taytay, Pasig and Sucat.

Currently with 15 men working for them, the delivery is scheduled twice in a week for each town.

They purchase the supply at a lower cost and resell it with an approximately 5-percent markup at a wholesale price.

According to Elvis, they are very much careful with the delivery, for a six-wheeler truck filled with the merchandise may cost them nearly P2 million worth of sales.

Establishing networks

It is never an easy task to start up a business, even more when it chiefly requires earning the trust of the customers from the very beginning.

"I went and talked to each one of them (store owners) personally," Elvis said in Filipino.

Since he started without a single contact to which he could deliver the plastic bags, he had to take his chances at any public market or grocery in various towns.

"Let's say from Marikina, my next stop would be in Antipolo, and I had to commute all along in order to get there," he added.

Elvis and Dulce eventually established a network of store owners who have consistently been ordering from them.

From dealership, they later opened up the business for consignment to help other customers who could not afford to pay right away.

Every Christmas, the couple gives away shirts, with their business name on it, as their token of gratitude to loyal customers.

"Aside from an honest and fair deal with them, that's the least that we can do," Elvis said.

Bags to riches

With where he is and what he has now, Elvis simply proves that not all success stories begin with a diploma.

He remembered how meager his life was in the province that he needed to drop out after high school.

"There are lots of people who may not have graduated, and yet they have decent lives," Elvis said. But now that he has the means to send his three children to school, it is his hope to see them finish their education.

"I want them to have the things that I was deprived of," Elvis added.

If it was not a degree in business management, what then could have caused him this fortune?

"A lot of hard work, perseverance and saving up," Elvis pointed out.

He said they started the business with a second-hand delivery van, which Elvis had bought from his brother.

After a year, he was able to acquire his first four-wheeler truck, another one in the following year and finally his six-wheeler truck.

Their luck apparently did not come in an instant. What they did, the couple first settled the down payment for the vehicles, and saved part of their earnings to pay the remaining balance on an installment basis.

Elvis now enjoys the fruits of his sweat and blood as he looks at his car, a motorcycle, and three other houses and lots.

As an advice, Elvis said, "You have to be mindful of what you are spending on; when you spend more than what you earn, that is where the problem begins."

Unchanged

Despite his business' success, Elvis remains a simple and humble person.

He is often seen in his wornout pants and rubber slippers, and would prefer sleeping at night in his cramped and sweltering "*bodega*" (warehouse) of plastic bags.

"For some people, once they begin to earn, they start to show it off," although Elvis does not deny the only whim he has, which is his car, he says he knows how to manage his expenses and prioritize the more important ones.

Their franchising business has truly expanded over the years. From plastic bags, Elvis and Dulce have also tapped the wholesale distribution of "*pancit*" (stir-fried noodles), spaghetti noodles and sugar, just recently.

But according to Elvis, his hopes for the business never stop. He is now starting to train his eldest son CJ, whom he sees will take over the business and carry his father's attitudes.

SPAGHETTI noodles at the warehouse of Elvis and Dulce

Bee farm's ...

From page B3-1

them to be conscious of their relationship with the environment," he said.

Farming lifestyle

Aside from discussing the environment, the video also talks about the farming lifestyle of the Magsaysays.

It relates how during weekends and semestral breaks, Magsaysay's four kids would help in the bee farm simply because they all loved nature.

This is why Ilog Maria is more of an advocacy, rather than a business.

Having no other outlets in malls is a conscious decision for the Magsaysays although they are constantly offered to open another store and join trade shows and bazaars.

"First, our production staff is not so big. We have only 10 workers and five of them are part-time," he said.

He said they also harvest the active ingredients of their products from the beehives, each according to the season.

"(The ingredients of their products) are seasonal, therefore limited. Our customers seem to multiply faster than our bees."

Right now, Ilog Maria sells products in the farm store in Silang and through their website, www.ilogmaria.com.

People from other islands like the Visayas and Mindanao order through the site.

Magsaysay is leaving the decision-making of business expansion to his children.

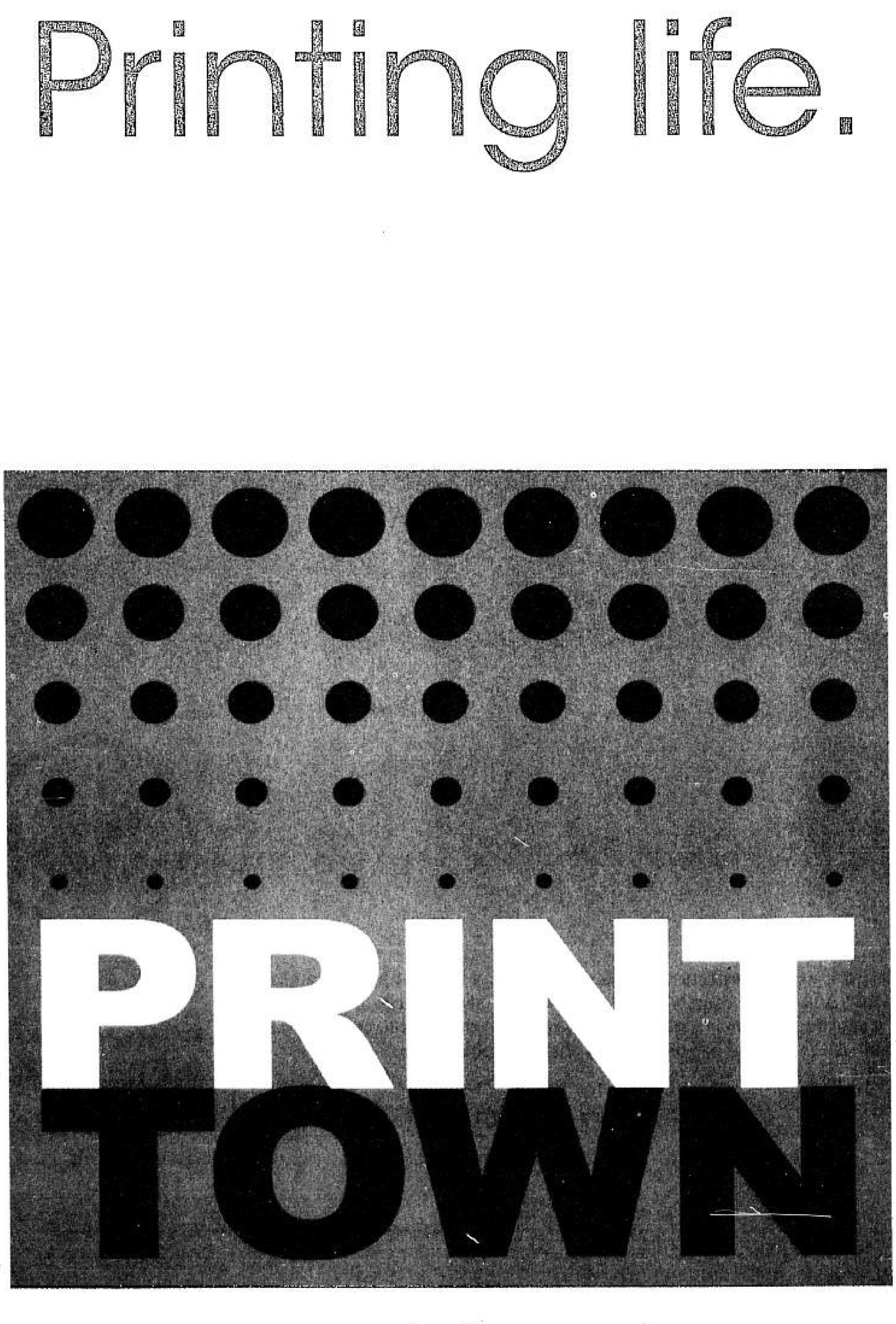
Asked why he has no plans to expand the production, he quipped, "What for?"

"What you need is different from what you want. When your needs are almost the same as your wants, then you'll find contentment," he added.

More customers and visitors are coming to Cavite as word of their advocacy continues to spread.

Magsaysay said, however, that he couldn't link the increase of their sales to the museum.

But he does not really care because what matters is they maintain a productive livelihood while protecting the environment.



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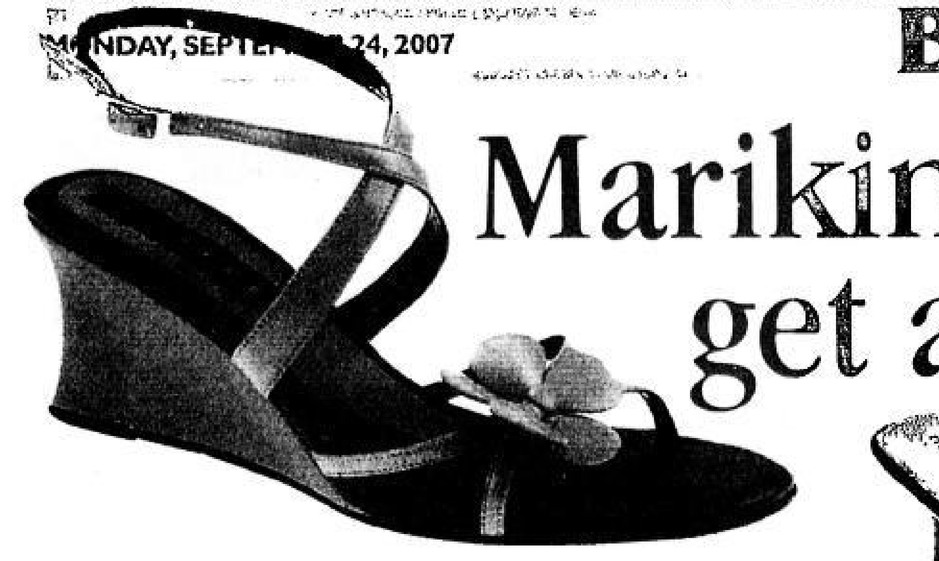
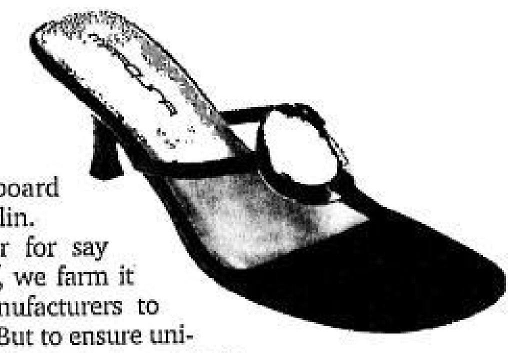
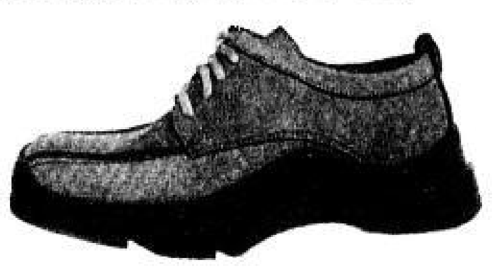


Marikina shoes get a new shine





By Eda Valt
Contributor

THE MARIKINA SHOE INDUSTRY IS GETting back on its feet as a group called SikapMo injects new life into the 120-year-old industry.

"Sikap means striving hard," said executive director Mercy Santos, "and by doing that, we were able to recover lost markets last year." SikapMo is an association that markets shoes made by members. Sales in 2006 hit P50 million, a steep climb from a low P2 million three years earlier when they first banded together.

Globalization has opened the domestic market to cheap imported shoes, drastically cutting down demand for local shoes. Industry leaders estimate that since the 1990s, 1,500 small shoe producers have ceased operating and over 20,000 workers have lost their jobs. The age-old craftsmanship of Marikina's "sapateros"—working in their little shops with hand tools and outdated equipment—simply cannot compete.

Marikeños, feeling the impact of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) three years after it took effect in 2000, lamented that their plea for some control-mechanism was falling on deaf ears. To revive the shoe industry, they had to pool resources to upgrade quality and improve productivity.

They formed Sigla ni Kapitan Moy (SikapMo) in early 2003. Kapitan Moy was Don Laureano Guevarra, Marikina's first shoemaker. "We used the founder's name to signify rebirth," Santos said.

Quality

SikapMo is now an industry association organized as a corporation with 82 member-companies consisting of small and medium shoe manufacturers, material suppliers and traders.

Each contributed what they could for SikapMo's seed money.

To recapture at least 10 percent of its lost market, SikapMo paid attention to marketing and the technical side of shoemaking.

On its first year, SikapMo focused on training. It ran seminars for both factory owners and workers to introduce them to more efficient manufacturing systems, quality control and product costing. It held joint workshops to update manufacturers and buyers of marketing methods. The Philippine Footwear Federation Inc. (PFFI) was tapped for skills enhancement.

SikapMo next worked at marketing, production, and material sourcing.

With members applying what they learned from a year of training, and sharing each one's best shoe designs, SikapMo was ready by its second year with a collection of comfortable, durable, fashionable and affordable genuine leather shoes. This it introduced to the market as Marquina, the common brand for SikapMo members. Marquina is carried by leading shoe stores but direct-selling companies Confetti, Via Benetto and Marikina Shoe Exchange are the bigger buyers. Eighty percent of orders received by SikapMo come from Natasha, a leading name in the direct selling business. Natasha is owned by SikapMo board member Mahar Jardiolin.

"Once a bulk order for say 10,000 pairs comes in, we farm it out to our small manufacturers to meet," Santos related. But to ensure uniformity of the finished product, member-shoemakers first go through a workshop with the buyer. Samples made in the workshop undergo a one-week "wear test."

If feedback is good, a size-run of 50 pairs is made for quality check. Only then can production for the first 10,000 pairs begin. Production is faster, having gone "manomatic." Taking-off from the traditional "mano-mano" system, a system was developed where shoe materials pass through an assembly line of workers to be fashioned by different hands, part-by-part and stage-by-stage, until at the end of the line is a new pair of shoes. After quality control, members turn in their finished quota to SikapMo.

"I don't check a factory's delivery for quality before disposing because I'm assured of the product's quality," Santos said A coding system ensures, however, that rejects or returns are traced to the responsible manufacturer.

More shoes, more jobs

Of SikapMo's 82 members, 50 are manufacturers, and half of these are small enterprises who are now the beneficiaries of SikapMo's efforts to upgrade production and generate interest in Marquina shoes. These small shoe producers have experienced growth in productivity and production volume.

Previously, a five-worker shop made 200 pairs of shoes a week. Now, a small factory of 50 workers can produce 5,000 pairs weekly. Some backyard operations are now gradually expanding in terms of structures, machines and manpower. Improved domestic demand also means more jobs, estimated at 1,200 in the small firms alone, and still growing. Workers are paid on a per piece basis.

Although SikapMo wants to focus on the local market, it has also tested the foreign market, by joining such expositions as the Asia-Pacific Leather Fair held in Hong Kong in 2004.

Marquina, a newcomer then, was consigned to the back of the pavilion.

"This proved to be fortunate," Santos said, "because it drew much of the heavy foot traffic to the restrooms."

The Hong Kong trade fair was a good exposure for Marquina and SikapMo.

After the event, a Japanese businessman based in China traced SikapMo in the Philippines and asked to be shown its member-factories.

Linked up with Bristol shoes, he asked for a trial order of 1,000 pairs and was impressed.

To enhance Bristol's technical capacity, the investor brought in Japanese technicians and high-tech machines worth millions, exclusive for his company's orders.

Since the business venture began more than a year ago, Bristol has had a new building built and hired more workers.

To make Marquina more competitive, Santos began to look into outsourcing materials to China where, in the first place, the cheap shoe imports mainly originate.

By banding together, town's show industry gets back on its feet

In 2006, she went on a Pearl2-supported material outsourcing trip to Guangzhou, scouring for raw materials.

SikapMo has received assistance from the Private Enterprise Accelerated Resource Linkages Phase II (Pearl2), a project supporting the development of small and medium enterprises to create meaningful jobs for Filipinos funded by the Canadian International Development Agency.

"Whatever training we needed, Pearl2 readily provided," said Santos. "We in marketing appreciate the value of what we have learned from all that training. There is real enhancement of knowledge and skills which, when converted, means quick turnover, improved production."

Values

In their drive to re-engineer their home-grown industry to become globally competitive, this group of Marikeños also experienced a strengthening of values.

Team spirit is replacing common attitude problems like "I know better than you" and "I can't share my business secret."

It was in this spirit of cooperation that SikapMo members readily shared their best designs to introduce an impressive Marquina collection in 2003.

The bigger members showed generosity by letting the smaller firms take benefit from SikapMo's marketing efforts.

Members dutifully attend and pay for training seminars from their own budget, instead of expecting fund assistance or freebies.

Members also help each other by passing on orders to those with none, and by lending materials to those who run out of supplies.

During slow months, Santos would try to cheer up everyone: "*Habang may tao, may sapatos* (As long as there are people, there will be shoes), and with malls proliferating, it's just a matter of facing up to the competition."

OLD shoemakers at work

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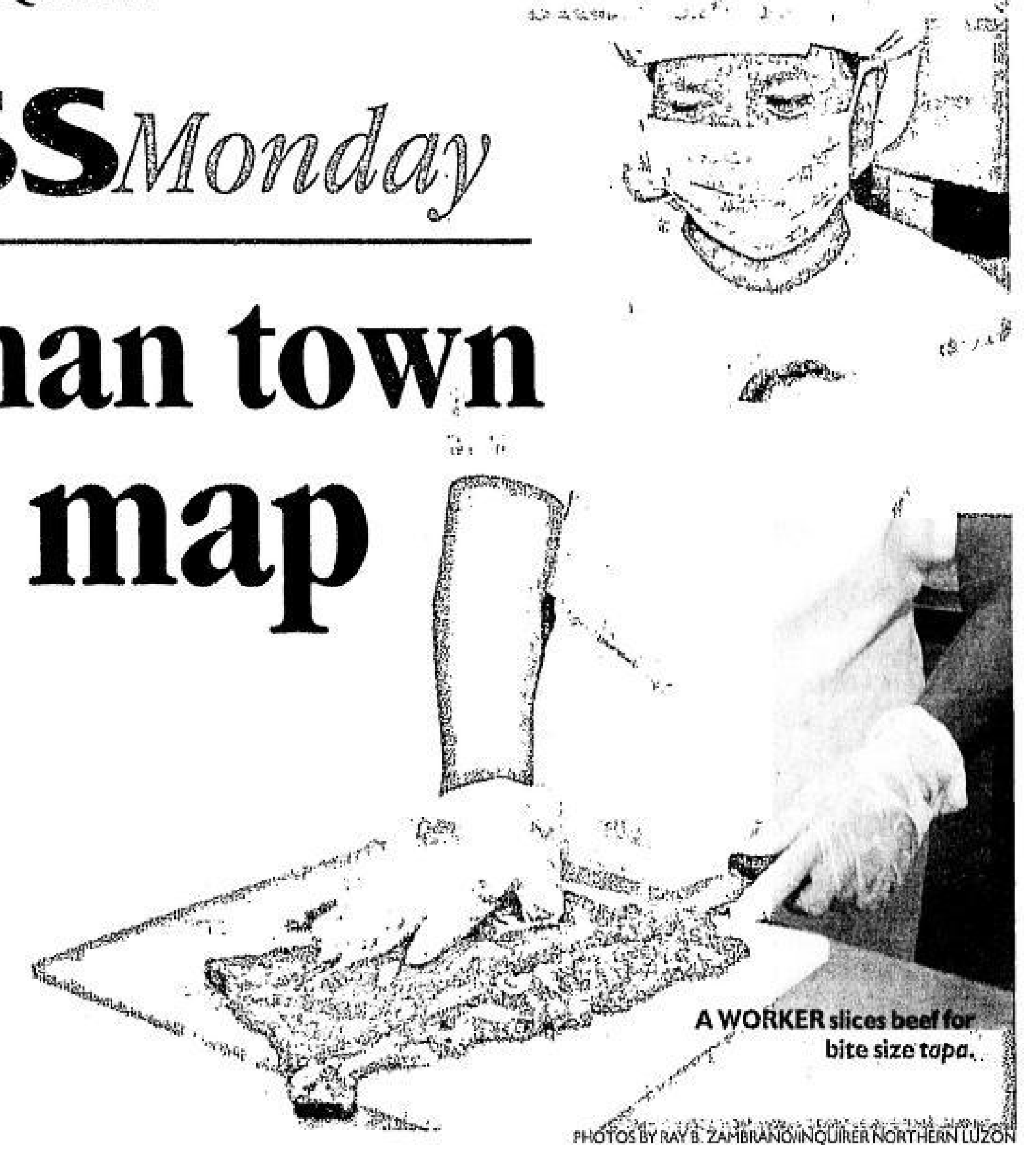
Tapa puts Pangasinan town on culinary map

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

MARCELA Barrozo, owner and manager of Cela's Mangaldan Best



A WORKER slices beef for bite size *tapa*.

PHOTOS BY RAY B. ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

'Be considerate with the customers so they will continue to patronize you'

MANGALDAN, PANGASINAN—THIS CENTRAL Pangasinan town is starting to carve a culinary reputation for its delectable beef tapa.

One brand, however, has led the pack in the local meat industry due to the efforts of its owner to experiment and improve her product.

Marcela Barrozo, 64, is the woman behind Celas' Meat Products (Mangaldan's Best) and is considered one of the pioneers in the town's processed meat industry.

"I am one of the original tapa makers in the town. Most of my contemporaries have passed away," said Barrozo.

Aside from tapa, Barrozo's backyard factory here churns out tocino (processed meat), hotdog, embutido (steamed ground meat) and different flavors of longanisa (native sausage), using about 2,000 kilograms of beef and pork.

The factory was given AA rating by the National Meat Inspection Commission and uses only preservatives approved by the Bureau of Food and Drugs, Barrozo said.

Best product

Her tapa was cited the best product during the 2006 Bangus Festival in Dagupan City while her tocino was accorded the same citation during the 2007 version of the festival.

It was Barrozo's hands-on management style and "experiments in taste" that eventually spelled her success. It helped, too, that she lives in a town with a large slaughterhouse, thus, fresh meat is readily available.

The meat factory has all the signs of modernity—machine-operated mixers, stainless tables, sanitized preparation rooms and uniformed workers.

No secret

But the hardship that Barrozo had to endure before she succeeded in her venture was not a secret, especially among local meat vendors and processors in the town.

Barrozo said her father died when she was three years old. A year later, her mother remarried a widower with several children.

"They were older than I was, and I became the errand girl who was asked to do most of the house chores," she said.

Feeling that she was treated unfairly by her step siblings, she sought the companionship of a neighbor whose parents were meat vendors.

"When I was 10, I would help in their meat stall, slicing beef for tapa. My friend's parents scolded me, saying I could hurt myself. But I persisted in helping them and they gave me free meals and a few centavos," she said.

After finishing grade school, she was forced to stop studying for two years because of poverty. Her family transferred to a remote village and could not afford to give her fare money to go to school.

Few meat slices

She tried to earn a little by asking meat vendors to lend her a few slices of meat (meat then were sold by piece, she recalled).

She earned some money after selling the meat in the market.

"[I earned] just a few pesos," she said.

She returned to school but continued to work in the market every weekend.

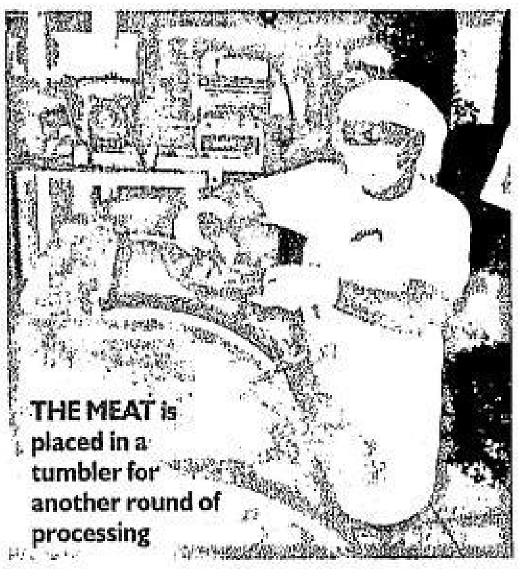
In 1962, when she was 18, Barrozo married another market vendor who sold clothing materials. Whenever she gave birth, her husband would took care of the baby while she tended the market stall.

She was already involved in butchering animals, a job that called for her to be up and working from 1 a.m. to noon.

The unsold meat she turned into tapa and tocino.

One baby came after another until the couple had six children.

Unknown vices



THE MEAT is placed in a tumbler for another round of processing

Her husband, who stayed home with the children, would come to the market to help her from 5 to 7 a.m. But unknown to Barrozo, he was taking money from the cash box and was indulging in gambling and womanizing.

"It was in 1972 that I found this out," she said. But it was only in 1985 that she mustered the courage to leave her husband.

"We lost all our money and little investments. Thus, the following years were really hard for me and my children," she said.

Barrozo did not give up. She borrowed money from lending shops and from Indian lenders.

"Even late at night, I was looking for pigs that I would buy on credit so these can be butchered the following day," she said.

Big break

Things looked better for Barrozo when Mt. Pinatubo erupted.

Animal raisers from the affected areas in Central Luzon sold their animals at low prices, thus she was able to buy them cheap. Soon animal raisers from Pangasinan also dropped their prices.

It was not long before Barrozo was able to reestablish herself in the local meat industry.

She attended seminars on food processing to increase her skills and knowledge of the business.

Barrozo employs several processors and packers. She also has two agents who sell the meat products in Pangasinan and neighboring provinces.

Proud mom

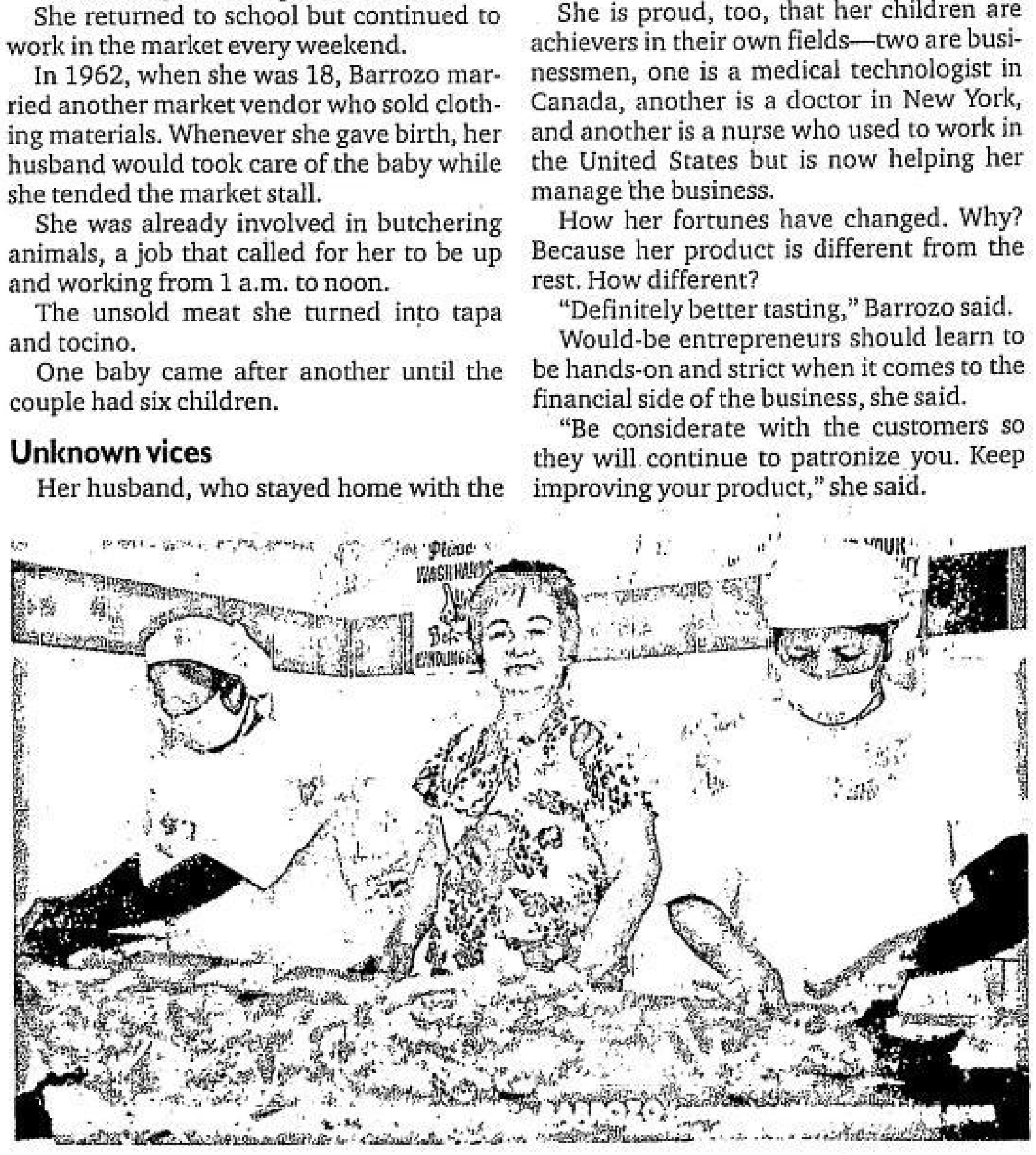
She is proud, too, that her children are achievers in their own fields—two are businessmen, one is a medical technologist in Canada, another is a doctor in New York, and another is a nurse who used to work in the United States but is now helping her manage the business.

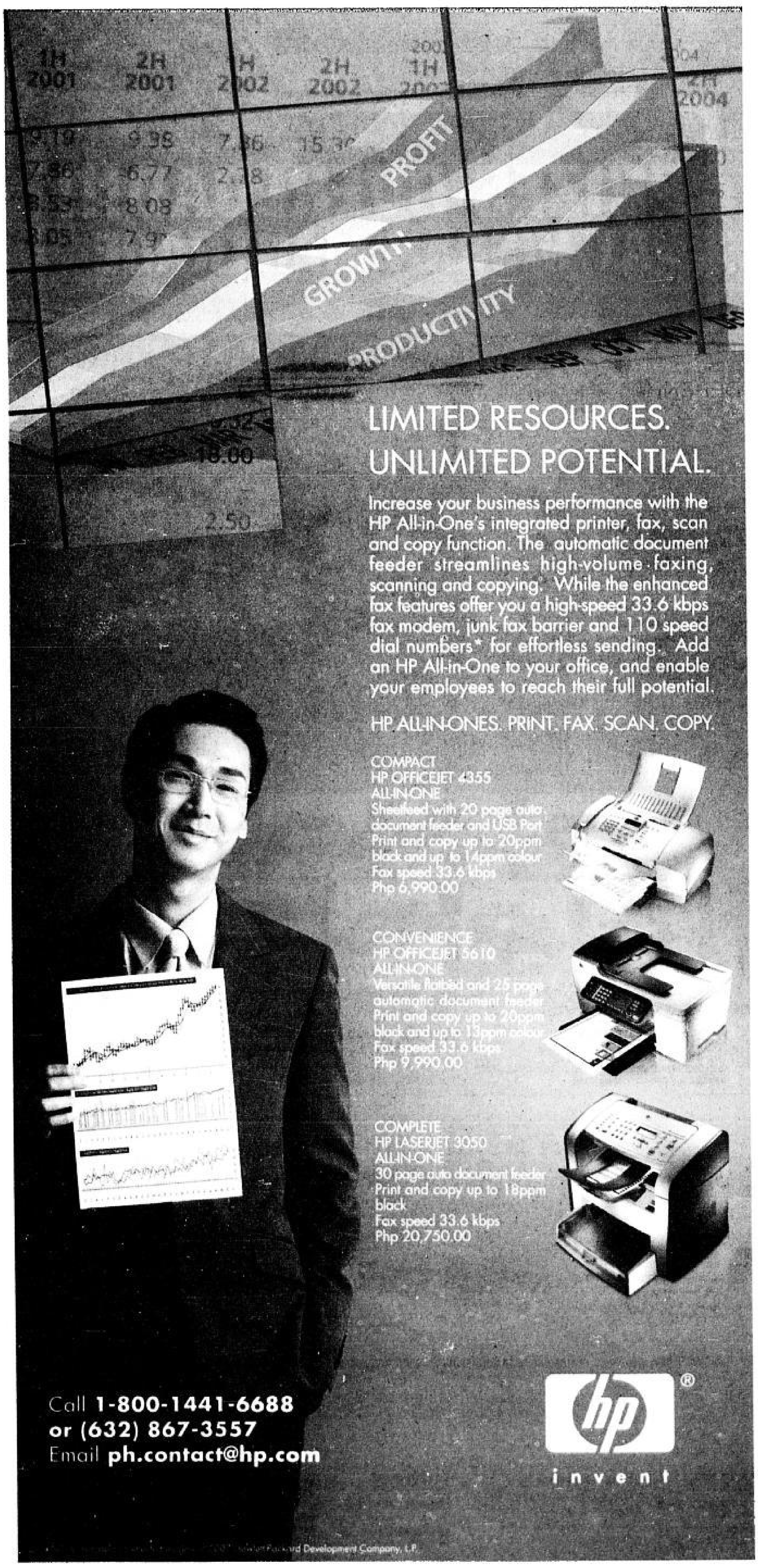
How her fortunes have changed. Why? Because her product is different from the rest. How different?

"Definitely better tasting," Barrozo said.

Would-be entrepreneurs should learn to be hands-on and strict when it comes to the financial side of the business, she said.

"Be considerate with the customers so they will continue to patronize you. Keep improving your product," she said.





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LIFESTYLE
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MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS**

MUSIC and songs by alumnae, students and faculty

To mark its centennial, the School of Music of St. Scholastica's College will seek to revive a forgotten social and musical tradition

'Tertulia' is back with a vengeance

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

DURING THE BELLE EPOQUE many decades ago, before the murderous Japanese military descended upon the archipelago, some families in Manila and, no doubt, other cities held *tertulias*.

These were informal, intimate cultural gatherings in the home in the late afternoons, with relatives and friends present. There was music, poetry and friendly discussions on art and the political situation. And refreshments would be served, of course.

There were tertulias in the Ermita, Manila, home of my grandfather, the poet Fernando Ma. Guerrero, his cousin Dr. Alfredo Leon Guerrero, and in the homes of other relatives and friends.

The rampage of the Japanese soldiers and the indiscriminate bombing of American airmen in February 1945 put an end to these tertulias. And Old Ermita was no more.

I learned about the tertulias from the reminiscences of my aunts and also from the short stories and plays of Nick Joaquin, notably "A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino," In fact, the character of the painter in that play was modelled on my great-grandfather Lorenzo Guerrero y Leogardo, the teacher of Luna and Hidalgo.

Comes now a serious attempt to revive the ambience of a tertulia, this time in the form of a public concert titled "A Contemporary Tertulia," to be held Oct. 7 at St. Cecilia's Hall, St. Scholastica's College. The concert is part of the year-long celebration of the centennial of the college's School of Music.

The activities, which culminate on Nov. 25 with a gala concert, pay tribute to Sr.Baptista Battig of Germany, who founded the School of Music in 1907. She died in 1942, shortly after Japanese soldiers took over the school buildings.

The dean of the College of Music is Sr.

'TERTULIA'/ C4

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Perfect Balance
Christine Jacob Sandejas tells us why achieving perfect balance is so important, in cooking as well as in life.

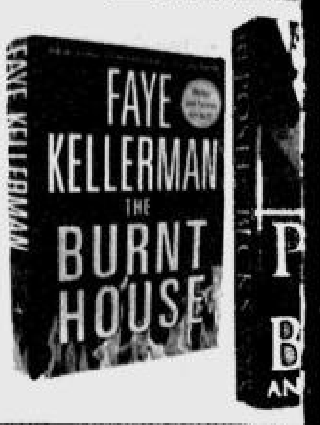
Christine Jacob Sandejas may have a lot on her plate these days, but she certainly knows how to keep things properly balanced. A devoted wife and mother, accomplished athlete, credible cook, and popular TV personality, Christine is the epitome of a confident, accomplished and balanced woman.

"Achieving perfect balance is very important, especially when you have to juggle the demands of your work, family and personal life all at the same time. I like to compare it to cooking, where you need to have the perfect balance of flavors to get a truly appetizing dish," says Christine.

A self-confessed loyal user of AJINOMOTO GINISA FLAVOR MIX, Christine reveals that she uses it in her everyday cooking. "It takes the guesswork out of cooking. Aji-Ginisa is the only complete seasoning mix with the perfect balance of garlic, onion and meat which gives that distinct 'gisa flavor' that is so ingrained in Filipino cooking"

It's no wonder then that Aji-Ginisa has chosen Christine as its official endorser. She is now the face that brings Aji-Ginisa to life, the Philippines' No. 1 complete seasoning mix for the last 16 years.

Lastly, Christine shares, "I only endorse products that I actually use, and Aji-Ginisa certainly fulfills that requirement! I consider it an honor to represent a product that empowers Filipino homemakers on a daily basis by ensuring that their families are eating delicious dishes with perfectly balanced flavor".



UE celebrates 61st foundation anniversary

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST'S 61ST'S foundation anniversary started with a Fun last Saturday at the Quirino Grandstand Parade Grounds, Rizal Park, Manila. with Mayor Alfredo Lim, an alumnus, leading the run.

A myriad of activities will be held until Sept. 30 at the UE Manila and Caloocan campuses. Theme of the anniversary is "UE at 61: Empowerment for Glocalization."

The annual conference of the Philippine Association of Japanese Scholars will be held on Sept. 27, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., at the UE Theater. UE president Ester Albano-Garcia is keynote speaker. The UP Noh Ensemble will entertain the participants.

UE chaplains Fr. Bernard O. Martin and Fr. Vino Faminiliago will preside the anniversary thanksgiving Mass in Manila and Caloocan, today, Sept. 24.

A major highlight of the celebrations is the University Service Awards on Sept. 28, 3 p.m. at the UE Conference Hall where the UE outstanding teacher, model management employee and model rank-and-file employee awards will be given out by UE chair and CEO P. O. Domingo.

Workshops/seminars on teaching methods, stress management, entrepreneurship, photography, e-Learning, etc., for faculty, students and university staff of both campuses will be conducted, as well as, several contests, competitions, quiz bees with UE students and high school students from different schools in northern Metro Manila.

Also featured are exhibits such as Fine Arts, Tourism, Engineering, Process Control System and Ad-Entrepreneurship Exhibits; Students' Bazaar and Exhibits; sportsfests like Sportsfest; "2007 Palakasan; "Uelympics; concerts and fashions shows.

The coronation of "Mr. & Ms. UE" will spice up the afternoon of Sept. 24 at the UE Theater. Awarding of prizes for winners in the Anniversary's various contests will be on Sept. 27, 8 a.m. -12 p.m. at the UE Theater.

Capping this year's celebration is the 2007 UE Grand Alumni Reunion on Sept. 30, 5 p.m. at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong.

Visit www.ue.edu.ph or visit UE Manila at 2219 C. M. Recto Ave., Sampaloc, Manila and UE Caloocan at 105 Samson Road, Caloocan.

8 schools enter quarterfinals of debate tournament

THE DECISION OF LYCEUM'S DEBATING team to limit the debate on the lifting of foreign ownership restrictions, specifically on the health and lifestyle industries in the country, paid off as it defeated Ateneo de Davao to enter the quarterfinals of the Philippine Debate Championship in ANC's "Square Off," Lyceum joins seven other schools in the quarterfinal rounds beginning next week, namely Ateneo de Manila University, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, University of the Philippines-Diliman, De La Salle University, Xavier University-Ateneo de Cayagan, Ateneo de Zamboanga and San Beda College.

In Wednesday's match, Suzy Selleza of Lyceum said lifting the restrictions would send the message to foreign investors that the Philippines is changing and becoming investor-friendly as a booming economy.

"[Restricting foreign ownership] is like imposing a stray jacket on foreign investors. For us to catalyze economic development, you need change at a minimal level," she said. "The health and lifestyle industry does not affect public interest like utility firms."

Chief adjudicator Glen Tuazon said Lyceum team's argument was problematic because they limited the debate to a small sector, but the Atenean debaters contradicted themselves when they argued against their opponents.

Tuazon said it was a unanimous decision to award the Lyceum team despite its "trivial case" and Selleza as the night's best speaker for coming up with a "clean speech in a debate full of contradictions."

The winner of the tournament will earn the privilege to represent the Philippines at the 2008 Worlds to be held in Thailand from Dec. 27-Jan. 5, 2008. ANC and Philippine Graphic will send the winning team to the international championship, where around 300 teams from around the world are expected to compete.

ANC's "Square Off: The Philippine Debate Championship" airs every Wednesday at 8 p.m. with replays on Thursdays at 1 p.m., Saturdays at 7 a.m. and 2 p.m., and Sundays at 1 a.m.

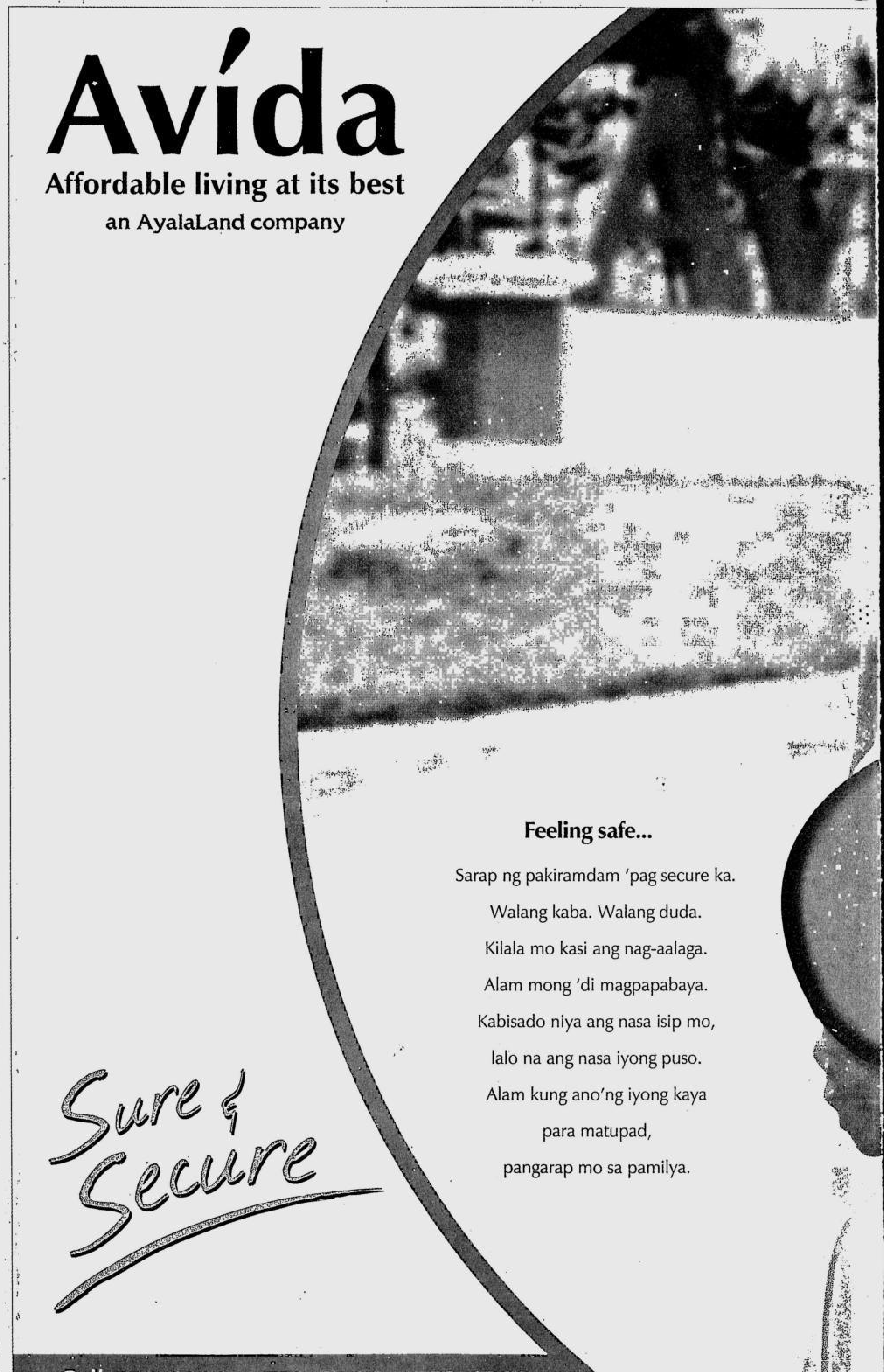
Long-time UST educator awarded

ASIA'S OLDEST UNIVERSITY HAS FETED one of its longest serving deans for her contributions in philosophical thought and education over the last 48 years.

Dean Emeritus Magdalena Alonso Villaba is this year's Outstanding Thomasian Awardee for Philosophy from UST and its alumni association. She received the award from top university officials at the UST Central Seminary auditorium last Aug. 20.

Villaba, who completed her doctorate in philosophy at UST in 1976, previously received the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Papal Award, Outstanding Catholic Authors Award, Outstanding Graduate School Alumna in Philosophy Award and the Japanese Bunku Koryo Award.

She is the author of such books as "The Art of Human Relations," "Prelude to the Wisdom of the East" and "Commentaries on Ethics and Oriental Philosophy." She has also authored academic articles for the UST journals Unitas, Life Today and Philippiniana Sacra.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FEU presents Kabayao family in classical co

FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY, THROUGH ITS President's Committee on Culture will present "Kabayao Family in Concert" on Sept. 26, at 10:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m., at the fully restored FEU Auditorium.

Featuring Gilopez and Corazon Kabayao and their children Sicilienne, Farida and Gilberto, the famous Kabayao family is based in Iloilo City, and has performed in different parts of the world.

The performances for the morning and the afternoon programs include: Bach's "Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor" (First Movement); "Trio in D Minor, Op. 49" (arranged for Four Violins) by Mendelssohn; "Battle Hymn of the Republic" (arranged for 8 Hands, 1 Piano); "Lift Up the Lamb" by Clydesdale; "Pandanggo" a folk song arranged by Kabayao; "Nais Ko" by Cayabyab and Kabayao; "Pampeana No. 1 Rhapsody for Four Violins & Piano" by Ginastera.

Gilopez was the first Filipino violinist to debut at Carnegie Hall in New York City, when he was barely 20 years old. Recipient of several awards and recognition including the prestigious President Ramon Magsaysay Award, Gilopez expressed his virtuosity using his 1724 Stradivarius violin. His wife Corazon has likewise garnered much recognition for her contribution to the cultural growth of their home province of Iloilo.

Sicilienne has a Bachelor's degree in Broadcast Communication from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas and taught Humanities at Central Philippine University in Iloilo City.

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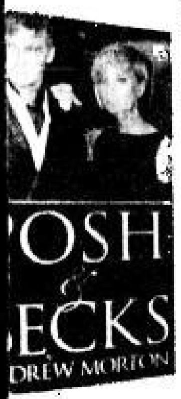
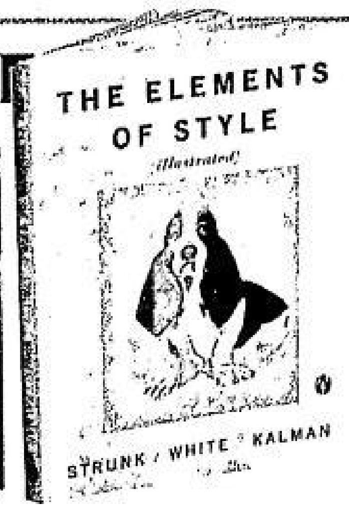
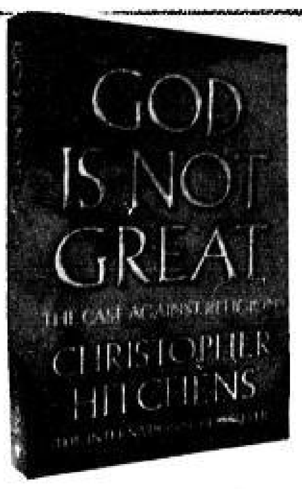


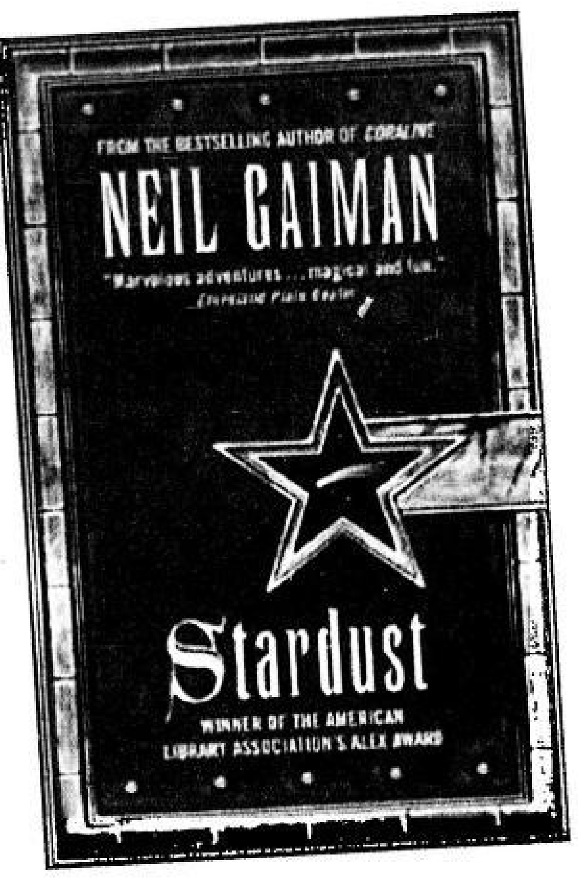




September reads

"THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON," by F. Scott Fitzgerald, is a witty and fantastical satire about aging. This strange and haunting story embodies the sharp social insight that has made Fitzgerald one of the great voices in the history of American literature.

The only style manual ever to appear on bestseller lists, "Elements of Style," by William Strunk, E. B. White and Maira Kalman (illustrator) is a much-loved classic that will forever be the go-to guide on writing English properly.


FROM THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF CORALINE
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She is a fashion icon with a lust for fame. He is possibly the most famous athlete on the planet. Together they are one of the most loved and hated pairs on Earth. "Posh & Becks" by celebrity biographer Andrew Morton is the sensational, highly addictive biography that delves beneath the Beckhams' glossy, glamorous façade to expose the real people behind the hype.

Learning to speak Tagalog can be enjoyable and rewarding. "Basic Tagalog: Learn to Speak and Understand Tagalog with Pimsleur Language Programs" by Pimsleur contains five hours of audio-only, effective language learning with real-life spoken practice sessions.

At the end of Frank Herbert's final novel, "Chapterhouse: Dune," a ship carrying a crew of refugees escapes into the uncharted galaxy, fleeing from a terrifying, mysterious Enemy. Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson's "Sandworms of Dune," meanwhile, answers the urgent questions Dune fans have been debating for two decades.

In Meg Cabot's newest book, "Queen of Babble in the Big City," Lizzie Nichols has moved to New York City with her best friend, Shari, and their boyfriends, Luke and Chaz. She finds an amusing though nonpaying job working as a wedding dress restorer with an insane French couple, and a paying job as a receptionist at Chaz's father's law firm.

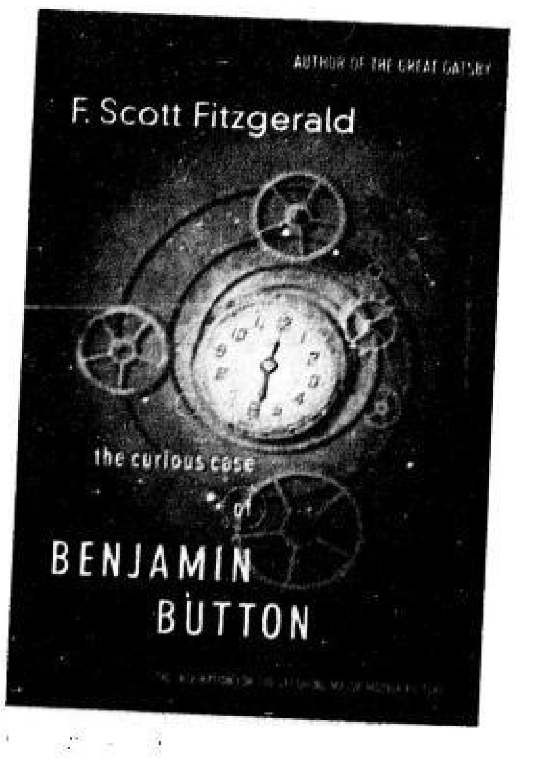
"Law of Attraction: The Science of Attracting More of What You Want and Less of What You Don't," by Michael J. Losier, is a self-help book that offers an easy-to-follow, step-by-step inspirational program through the process of figuring out what you want and what you need to do to get it.

A small commuter plane crashes into an apartment building in Granada Hills, California. LAPD Lieutenant Peter Decker works overtime to calm rampant fears of a 9/11-type terror attack. But a grisly mystery lives inside the plane's charred wreckage: the unidentified bodies of four extra travelers. Combining relentless suspense with intense, multi-layered human drama, "The Burnt House" is Faye Kellerman at her mesmerizing best.

Do you have the opportunity to do what you do best everyday? Chances are, you don't. Here's a book that spent more than five years on the bestseller lists and ignited a global conversation. "StrengthsFinder 2.0" by Tom Rath helps millions to discover their top five talents.

Christopher Hitchens makes the ultimate case against religion in "God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything." With eloquent clarity, he frames the argument for a more secular life based on science and reason, in which hell is replaced by the Hubble Telescope's awesome view of the universe, and Moses and the burning bush give way to the beauty and symmetry of the double helix.

The books are available at Powerbooks Specialty Store with branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29), SM Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta 3 (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25), Robinson's Place Ermita (5233334/ 524-3448), SM Mall of Asia (56-0244), Festival Supermall (8508221) and TriNoma (9431581/82).



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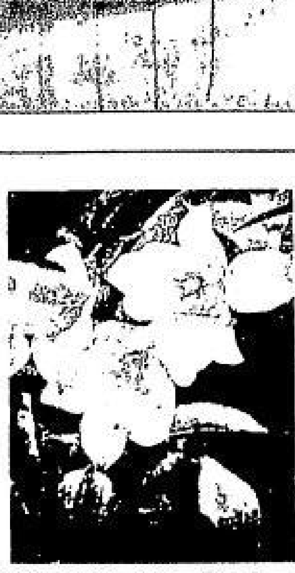

"LILY'S," by Tony Empleo

ARTIST TONY EMPLEO WILL PRESENT "Blown-up Florals" 20 acrylic on canvas works, Sept. 29-Oct. 21 at Moon Garden in Tagaytay City.

Nestor Jardin, president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, will cut the ceremonial ribbon formally opening the exhibit at 4 p.m., Sept. 29.

The Blown-up Florals series features tropical flowers.

Empleo a self-taught artist and a native of Lucban, Quezon, started sculpting in bronze, stone and wood in the "80s. Later, he went into portrait art and charcoal sketching.

By the mid-'90s he had mastered oil and acryl on canvas. Starting with pointillistic techniques, he soon became a photorealist.

The versatile craftsman sews garments, welds and solders metals, works with wood and rattan, and turns scrap into something of value.

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SR. BAPTISTA Battig, founder of St. Scholastica's College School of Music

"**TEN** little nuns all in a row..."

'Tertulia' is back with a vengeance

From page C1

Mary Placid, OSB.

In a recent press conference to announce the Oct. 7 event, concert pianist Della G. Besa of the school's Music Alumnae Association noted that the turn-of-the-century tertulia was a "thoroughly charming way of spending an afternoon."

She added: "Discussions on a variety of subjects would also take place, punctuated by displays of musical and literary talent, and capped by the omnipresent merienda."

As of Oct. 7 show, Besa said: "We have adopted the tertulia for our own purposes. It is now more of a concert, with European and Filipino compositions performed by the faculty members and graduates of the school. We are treating the tertulia in a contemporary way, with narration."

The program includes songs and compositions by Schumann, Schubert, Ravel, and Filipino folk songs as arranged by Augusto Espino and A. Consolacion. The evening will be capped by Mendel's "Hallelujah Chorus" by a 100-voice choir.

This revival of the tertulias will be done with style and flair. The performers will be attired in formal Filipiniana wear. The performers include "10 little nuns [Benedictine pianists] all in a row," including Sr. Mary Placid. The youngest performer is LorenzoTorres, 8, and the most senior is Cora Mateo, 87.

TERTULIA performers include Lorenzo Torres, 8, and Cora Mateo, 87.

GOLDEN Oldies of St. Scholastica School of Music

SR. ANGELICA Leviste, OSB, president of St. Scholastica's College, is the narrator of the whole tertulia. Listening to her is Gabrielle Joy, a high-school student and daughter of alumna Ramona Tatco Balincos.

GRACE Africa-Gatchalian stands beside her first teacher, Araceli Rivera-Fuentes. Seated at right is Araceli Barba Segundo.

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UNDOUBTEDLY one of the country's top boys choirs, the Tiples follows a 400-year-old tradition of sacred singing at Santo Domingo.

The Tiples de Sto. Domingo relives the romance of boys' choral singing in time for the centenary of the canonical coronation of La Naval in October 2007

HIMSELF a former Tiple, Prof. Eugene de los Santos is Tiples' choral director.

Angelic voices for La Naval

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

WATCHING THE Tiples de Sto. Domingo perform in a recent concert at Philamlife Theater was truly a hallelujah experience.

Undoubtedly one of the country's finest boys choirs, the Tiples, as the boys are fondly called, showcased their angelic voices much to the delight of their audience in a concert held as part of the centenary celebration of the canonical coronation of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, La Naval de Manila, whose feast day falls on Oct. 14, the second Sunday of the Rosary month.

The Tiples is based in Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City, where it sings in the liturgical services, following a tradition that dates back to over 400 years ago when a Dominican priest, Father Pedro Bolaño, founded the Escuela de Tiples ("School of Tiples") in 1587. From this school came the first batch of Tiples that graced the solemnized church activities throughout the liturgical year.

PIANIST Greg Zuniega collaborated with the Saraza brothers in their violin recital.

In Spanish, the word *tiple* means *la mas aguda de las voces humanas, propia especialmente de mujeres y niños*. Roughly translated, it means "the highest of the human voices, which fits especially women and children." True to this description, the Tiples, through time, has kept the tradition of fine singing.

The typical vocal production of the *tiple* is unique because the sound has more body akin to that of women than the usual fragile children or boys' choir, minus, however, the sensual vocal flair of the former.

The Tiples' voices wear the innocence of the children's sound, so pure and unaffected. When they are mixed with the male voices of the seminarians of Sto. Domingo, classified into tenor and baritone, to form a grand choir, a ravishing solid sound of a mixed choir emerges.

Under the sensitive handling of Prof. Eugene de los Santos of the UST Conservatory of Music, the Tiples sound is totally engaging. De los Santos, who himself was a Tiple, has kept the choir's tradition of sensitive singing.

The Tiples directly conveyed warmth of the human voice that enthralled the audience into sublime meditation. Arcadelt's "Ave Maria," Britten's "Missa Brevis," and the moving evening prayer from Humperdinck's opera, "Hansel and Gretel" intoned in English translation, moved the audience into soulful reflection. Truly, praying is doubly done in singing, as Fr. Bienvenido S. Trinilla, OP, prior of the Sto. Domingo Convent, said in his welcome remarks before the show.

The concert was a festive occasion participated in by guest artists, such as soprano Thea Perez, who sung the solo part of Mozart's "Alleluia;" singer Jan Nieto, and Michael Jacinto. Michael Richard Lopez, who used to be the organist/pianist of the Tiples, collaborated on the organ and piano, substituting for Jonicis Bulalacao, who had left for the US to join his family.

Ex-Tiple Nicanor Infante conducted the Sto. Domingo Male Choir, composed of former Tiples whose voices had matured. "Philippine Idol" finalist Gian Carlo Magdangal, also an ex-Tiple, rendered some solo numbers.

The concert had a visual component, a documentary on the life of the Tiples as interns in the past. Of course, at present, the Tiples are no longer housed at Sto. Domingo; they just come for rehearsal and go back to their respective homes afterward. A whiff of nostalgia marked the viewing of the documentary, prompting some in the audience to wish that the Tiples be housed under one roof again to keep the tradition alive. Having worked with the Tiples for more than a decade, from the time I became officially the conductor of the grand choir in 1989, seeing them again perform after several years brought back sublime memories, which made listening even more pleasurable.

Incidentally, some of these Tiples had entered the seminary; only a few, however, became priests.

Catch the angelic voices of the Tiples. They sing at the 10 a.m. mass every Sunday. Better yet, witness the re-enactment of the 1907 canonical coronation on Oct. 4, 2007, during a High Mass to be concelebrated by the papal representative, several bishops from all across the land, and the Dominican Order, with civil officials led by President Macapagal-Arroyo in attendance. Also attend the daily nine-day novena in honor of "La Naval," from Oct. 5 to the 13th, which culminates in the grand La Naval feast on the 14th, highlighted by the thunderous procession in the afternoon. Gloriously sing with the Tiples as they intone the beautiful hymn to the Blessed Mother, the "Adios," composed in three voices, by a certain P. Hernandez, who perhaps was a layman, and arranged to a four-part mixed chorus. National Artist Lucio D. San Pedro added the tenor voice to the supreme hymn in 1996, upon my prodding, to standardize its singing to a grand mixed choir, as the brother seminarians and Dominican priests participate in its singing.

ANGELIC/ D3

La Naval caretaker lives up to his promise

Rolando Sanchez Tayo has devoted his life to grooming the Nuestra Señora del Santissimo Rosario, La Naval de Manila, whose centennial of canonical coronation the nation will mark next month

By Gino Marasigan
Contributor

"*HUWAG MO AKONG pababayaan* (Do not abandon me)," uttered the voice of a woman.

"*Parang boses ng isang matandang babae* (It sounded like the voice of an old lady)," Mang Rolly recalls.

It was about 10 a.m. and he was alone cleaning the area at the side of the Virgin's altar near the tabernacle. Mang Rolly thought perhaps an old lady was just praying out loud. When he looked again, the tabernacle area was empty and not a soul was within earshot.

This is the story of a man, as if handpicked by the Virgin herself to be her future *alalay* (aide), wardrobe master, escort and even court historian all rolled into one.

It was by accident that Rolando Sanchez Tayo, Mang Rolly as everybody calls him, landed at Sto. Domingo on Aug. 5, 1974.

He was accompanying a friend who was a member of the Confraternity of the Santo Entierro when he found the serenity of the convent-church very much to his liking.

"*Nagustuhan ko and katahimikan, kaya pabiro akong nag*-apply *agad sa Padre* Sakristan *na si* Fr. Augusto Antonio (I liked the silence, so in jest I applied for a job with the Father Sacristan, Fr. Augusto Antonio)," related Mang Rolly.

There was no maintenance staff during that time so he was immediately hired. He was 26 years old and just got married the year before.

Mang Rolly performed all sorts of maintenance and janitorial tasks in the first few months of his work in Sto. Domingo. Until one afternoon, he chanced upon Father Augusto painstakingly mending the damaged portions of a *santo*'s (religious image) vestments to be used for the upcoming La Naval procession. He offered to help Father Augusto and from then on Mang Rolly still does the mending of all the vestments of the Virgin and her retinue of Dominican saints for the annual La Naval grand procession.

MANG Rolly has been handling the mending of the vestments for La Naval and the Dominican saints used in the grand La Naval procession every second Sunday of October.

Dressing up the Virgin

Soon enough Father Augusto was training Mang Rolly how to put up the Belen (*creche*) in time for Simbang Gabi (Dawn or Aguinaldo Mass), the *monumento* or altar of repose for Maundy Thursday, the arch for the *salubong* (encounter) which takes place at dawn of Easter Sunday, in repairing and taking care of the vestments of the *santos*, and in decorating the church for other *novenarios* aside from his regular maintenance duties of church facilities.

"*Masyado siyang mahigpit, disiplinado, madetalye at ayaw ng mali ang trabaho, gusto niya palaging tama ang ginagawa mo* (He is very strict, a disciplinarian, he pays attention to details and dislikes mistakes, he always wants you to do your work properly)," Mang Rolly fondly remembers the many years he trained under Father Augusto. He is deeply indebted to this kind priest who imbued him with commitment to duty and a sense of perfection and attention to the minutest details.

In dressing up the Virgin for her annual feast, Father Augusto and Mang Rolly had to wait outside the dressing room until after the *camareras* and the sisters from Siena Convent are through dressing the virgin with the *camison* (chemise). He also remembers the other "ladies-in-waiting" who are always present for the dressing: Magdalena Casafias, Rosita Conde and Anatolia Alarcon, who are now all deceased.

Those who came from nearby Siena Convent were Mother Naty Pilapil (also deceased), Sr. Anunciacion Ayson, Mo. Stella Salao, Mo. Cecilia Calaguas, Mo. Aurora Villaverde and the present prioress general, Mo. Teresa Examen.

It would take almost an entire day putting on the robes and accessories. This annual ritual honed Mang Rolly to master the art of draping the robes not only of the Virgin of La Naval but of the other saints as well.

Slowly, Mang Rolly earned the trust of the Dominican brethren. At the time of Father Augusto's death in 1983, Mang Rolly had become the most indispensable hand in Sto. Domingo as no one else was entrusted to prepare the Virgin for all her feasts.

Greener pastures

In the mid-'90s, after 20 years of doing routine work, he experienced a certain restlessness that bothered him no end. He started to feel envious of the very maintenance staff he had trained at Sto. Domingo who were able to get jobs abroad. The *katahimikan* (silence) of the church that he used to love was now a maddening silence. He wanted desperately to leave and discover life outside the walls of Sto. Domingo. It was under these circumstances he decided to resign from his job, and say farewell to the Virgin he has served for many years:

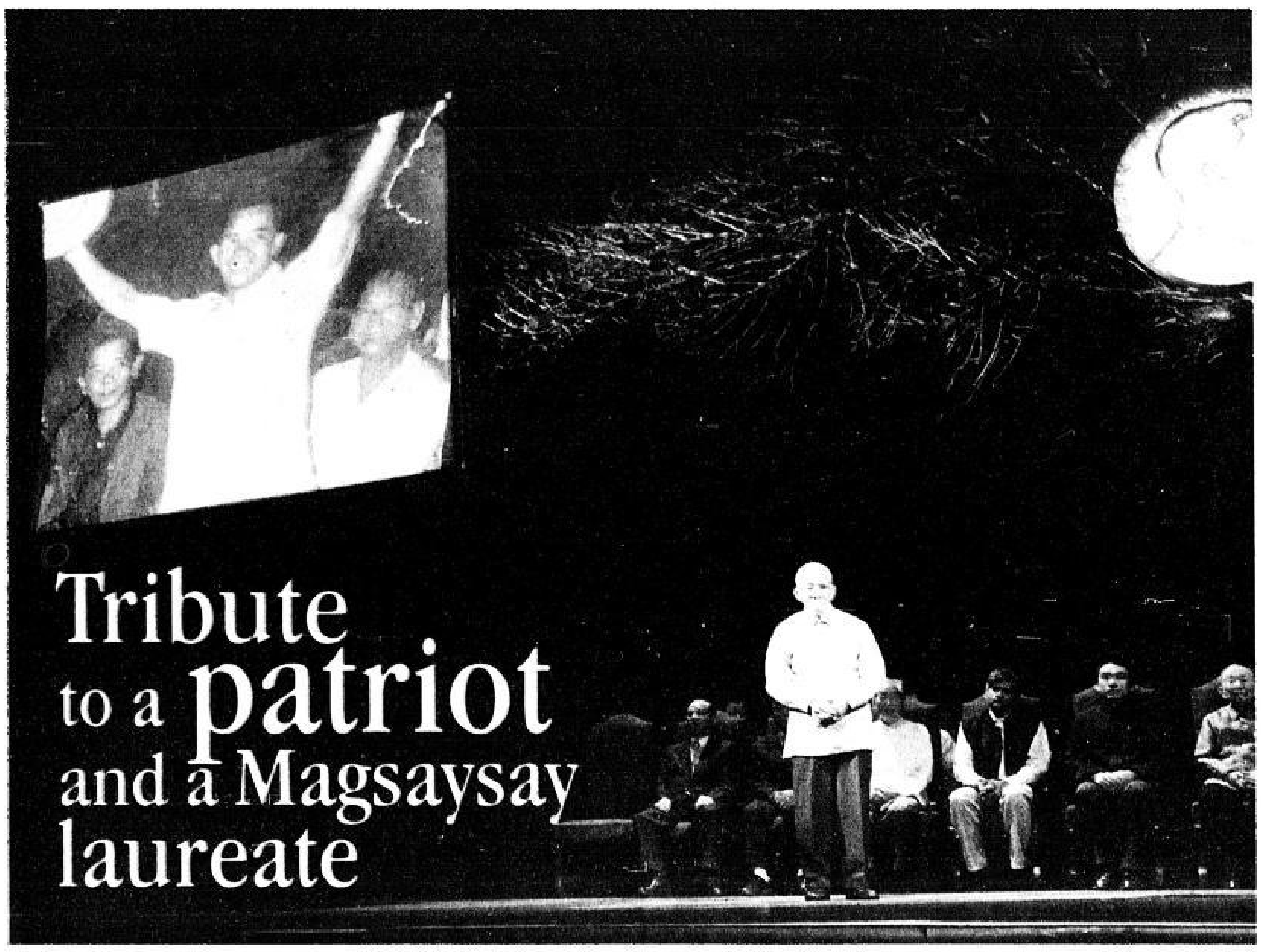
It was 10 a.m., there was no one in sight, the voice of an old lady continues to ring in his ears, "*Huwag mo akong pababayaan*." And in a sudden jolt, it dawned on Mang Rolly that it must have been the Virgin herself speaking to him in a very extraordinary way. With all the reverence and humility that he could muster, he found himself praying, "*Pasensya na po... hindi na po... pangako po iyan* (I am very sorry, I will not leave anymore, that is a promise.)."

From then on, Mang Rolly vowed never again to leave her for as long as he had the strength to accomplish all his duties for the Virgin.

For more than 30 years now, every morning as Mang Rolly arrives at Sto. Domingo, he prays to the Virgin to give him strength so he could continue serving Her. At the end of the day, before going home, he prays again in profound gratitude for all the blessings she had showered on him and his family. As to being Our Lady's "*alalay* and handyman, it shall be a promise to be kept for a lifetime.

Mang Rolly accompanied the vicarial image of La Naval in a pilgrimage to the United Slates in September 1999, and he cannot forget how he awkwardly sat beside the statue which was dressed like a *manang* (an old lady) occupying

LA NAVAL/ D3



Tribute to a patriot and a Magsaysay laureate

JOVITO Salonga acknowledges the applause during the Ramon Magsaysay Awards ceremonies on Aug. 30 as a video biography of him shows when he was proclaimed Liberal Party Senate candidate in 1971. ROMY HOMILLADA

A poetess-culture maven relives the terrible years of the war when she carried on a dangerous but courageous friendship with former Senate president Jovito Salonga

By Virginia Moreno, *Contributor*

BETWEEN THEIR SECRET TRANSFER FROM a Fort Santiago dungeon to far-out Muntinlupa Prison, these four high-risk prisoners were held incommunicado in an innermost cell of the Isaac Peral-Ermita Precinct in 1942.

The precinct commander was Gervacio Guingon. A Filipino himself, the precinct officer became an accomplice with his prisoners in sending desperate messages to their families in outlying Pasig in Rizal province, in Makati, and God-alone-knows-where in the wilds of Montalban hills.

No one could tell exactly when their trip was to start. Their prison van was stalled. Waiting for rationed gas? Or for more armed escorts? The prisoners, according to the guerrilla's mouth-to-mouth bamboo telegraph, were:

Banker Albino Sycip, for funding the underground resistance;

director Victor Pagulayan of the National Rice and Corn Corp. for "economic sabotage" (he had released all the Naric grains left from the bombed Port Area warehouses to the people);

University of the Philippines law student Jovito R. Salonga, for operating radio contacts with the Rizal guerrillas' news correspondent, Paul Katigbak, disguised by an old Batangas name Catigbac (for exactly what prohibited news and to whom sent were not in the official charge sheets of the police precinct).

Should the guerrillas learn that these prisoners were in that Manila halfway jail and any plot to spring them out on their hours-long way to their next fate, Muntinlupa Prison, would bring down mass execution on all those caught: guards, escorts, prisoners…

Conspiratorial talk

This drama—of life-and-death questions demanding dangerous solutions—was mulled over a dinner table in our old, quiet Juan Luna Street house.

Its tall windows used to be opened wide, lit up for the church-bound pilgrims on Immaculate Conception Day. But since the Dec. 8, 1941, bombing, they had been closed, and our house had become like a fortress. Brocade curtains that were let hanging long after Christmas had us thickly shielded from daylight and any sightings of the Japanese soldiers marching by.

Padded, shrouded and confined from one darkened room to the next, we were moving figures as in a shadow play. No more enemy air raids, mercifully. Only the blackouts remained. Bataan had fallen.

Yet, the two characters left alone to act on this crisis were whispering: my mother and the Isaac Peral Police Precinct commander, Mang Vasiong to us, a back-alley, most-trusted neighbor, to whose "safe-house" all the men of our family had joined earlier his sons and nephews. All of them were secret guerilla defenders, in case of a house raid.

I was told to leave the children, my two young brothers and little sister, bored with playing on a *sungka* shell game instead of their lost toy, an RCA table radio. The radio had been surrendered to, no, confiscated by, the Army garrison. The kids were strictly ordered not to babble about the radio since the uncle of Ate's friend happened to be Mr. Salonga, to whom the radio was given and was now in prison.

Mother had already declared, "I will go! Even if I've to walk!"

As a known Binondo rice stock trader, Mother had been entrusted with 5,000 sacks of Naric rice for safekeeping by director Pagulayan. The stocks were to be distributed to the people against the coming shortage and famine. She then went to the prison, disguised as the precinct commander's family, bringing in his day's meals.

Youngest prisoner

In my naïve schoolgirl style, I elevated Mang Vasiong's youngest prisoner to his jail guard.

"He's very caring of the old man Sycip," Mang Vasiong said.

"Mr. Sycip must be the father of his classmate Alexander Sycip, editor of the Philippine Collegian," I explained.

"He speaks English very well." His Tagalog, *ay tunay*! (authentic). Better than my Nueva Ecija [*katutubo*] original.

Mang Vasiong laughed as he complimented Jovito Salonga. He turned a little grave. "He misses books, anything to read," he said. Books in English were banned.

When I was asked at last to join mother and Mang Vasiong at the dinner table, laid out by the apologetic cook with war-time menu: a stew of *kangkong* (swamp cabbage), *camote*, eggplant halves watered by a soup of clams gathered by the houseboy from the Tondo seashore.

Dessert consisted of grilled bits of coconut meat, mockingly called *casta-niog*, as in *castanias*, chestnuts. And cups each of banana-leaf tea.

I knew by then that more of the same war-time menu items were to be packed by the cook (more apologetically) in *fiambreras*, empty tin pails. And that I was to be freed from my virtual house arrest, period. To carry two of those tin pails, without question, with Mother, for four high-security prisoners.

I was quiet throughout the meal.

Troubling question

One question troubled me all night: Was I, less of an adult still, more of a girl-child, in a time of war, to be entrusted with the grave mission that was to be carried out like a simple daily errand? Really, what does prisoner Jovito Salonga think of me?

"Too lyrical," Salonga said once about my compositions. Was that good or bad?

"She laughs so openly," he told Alice, comparing us possibly. Alice was recently orphaned and when we first met she was still wearing black.

From my Tondo street window, people didn't know that funerals of gangsters were escorted to La Loma Cemetery with dancing women to band music and funny men. So much to laugh about while weeping, I inherited from my Tondo.

Like Jovito, Alice could afford gentle beatific smiles. *Anak kasi ng pari*! Son of a priest! I heard, or misheard, from his ugly rival in political philosophy on campus. "His father is a Protestant pastor," Alice righted me.

That explained to me his work ethics, his careful words and his moral compass.

He asked me why I was failing in Botany. He was very concerned.

I once, teasing, said, "I eat flowers," I meant, "I eat gifts of pastilles of roses, violets, vetivers," and "My Botany professor is an orchid expert and graphologist, and she says my handwriting shows I am intuitive, sensitive, creative, etcetera." (But she still failed me in Botany, after all those "tives.")

But what I never told Jovito was that my strict Botany professor but admiring graphologist saw his handwriting on the margins of my best compositions. "Mr. Jovito Salonga writes like Dr. José P. Rizal," my professor told me.

Drama

Allow me to enumerate the last acts of this drama:

One night we were startled by a visit of Mang Vasiong with another jail guard from Muntinlupa who carried the smallest paper in Jovito's handwriting for me, wrapped with dry betel-nut leaf in his mouth! I kept that Big Brother message of faith for years, embalmed in my Chinese writing desk.

On the Emperor's Day, the guerrilla's bamboo telegraph passed on the news that all four prisoners of the police precinct commander had been released from Muntinlupa Prison.

Salonga arrived on my April birthday soon after with a gift tied by a handkerchief—a dozen star apples.

Censorship

Decades later, "La Loba Negra," as my heroine Itim Asu having been branded as myth by a powerful historian, and more, facing a threat of a lawsuit on my interpretation of Juan Luna's crime in my playbook "Juan Luna, Indio Spoliarium," in spite of Nick Joaquin as judge for both their contest first prizes, now Sen. Jovito R. Salonga asked me to the Senate to speak on censorship.

His law office partner, Alexander Sycip, while a lifelong admirer and funds supporter of our Literary Apprentice, phoned him: "You know her. She'll speak her mind! Think of the danger."

"Precisely," he replied, unmoved. I had a blast upholding the "criminal" injustice in the 1929 expulsion of José Garcia Villa (later, National Artist for Literature) from the University for writing girl's breasts are twin coconuts, up to my crowing on the decision by the US Supreme Court to lift the ban on the release of James Joyce's "Ulysess."

After the war, we continued with our interrupted life: He went on to Harvard University after brilliantly topping the bar exams. I went on to New York for theater training and creative poetry workshop on a Rockefeller Foundation grant—uncannily, the same sponsor of the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation Award that the twice-prisoner under two military regimes would be later honored as a human-rights warrior.

Back to the war

"How much do you know of my student prisoner Jovito Salonga?" I was asked, in a half-interrogatory way and half-intelligence report mode of a true police precinct commander.

"I was introduced to him on Registration Day by his niece, Alicia Cruz; she's a pre-Medicine student. They're from Pasig," I began.

To impress him that both uncle and niece were of "good family," I added… "the grandfather is Philippine Revolutionary Gen. Valentin Cruz who lives in an old house like ours. You know my classmates? Tommy (Mariano Ampil), he's our Valedictorian."

"Pre-Medicine student Gerry (Gerardo de Leon) is always with me; they're our neighbors near Gagalangin Chapel. Imagine Mr. Salonga picking me out of my boy escorts! Alice must have shown him a piece I wrote. After Literature class, I sit with him in the big library and he would read my compositions. He's stricter than my American professor. Sometimes he shows a piece or two to the other senior Law students. They're the ones you must have seen in the newspapers? President Quezon speaking to them in the ROTC field about being brave… That December day Pearl Harbor was bombed, UP was closed. I've not seen him since."

With 'Mother Courage'

How to go? Trusted or not, Mother and I moved preparations before sunrise, ahead of the street march of the army garrison troops.

Stripped of jewelry, in plain house dresses, and shod in *cochos*, soft slippers—not even in my school shoes or *bakya*, wooden clogs—"both will make too much cluttering noise"—we were dressed-down, ready.

To the tin pails stuffed with the war-time menu, guava leaves were added for sores and cuts and pieces of ginger for tea against coughs and colds. All wrapped dry in rice paper for the "messages." A pencil stub in my pocket.

From Rosa Fojas, called the Queen of Cocheros and Calesins in Tondo, a mud-greased *calesa*, Mother leased, and not Queen Rosa's white Arab horse that was once a prize racehorse. (It had been dragged off days before, anyway.)

Nothing, no one, must attract attention. Or tempt confiscation. Hence, we took the longest backroads from Juan Luna to Santa Cruz bridge to south Ermita Police Precinct without confiscations, arrests—miraculously, in occupied Manila. I'll admit I was perversely elated to be out and free in the streets.

I lost heart, instantly, while following my "Mother Courage" inside this police precinct-jailhouse, to be ink-stamped "Family," ostensibly bringing all-day's meals to the police commander—glided in a delirium on being ushered silently by a jail guard through dark corridors of cell after cell of sleeping prisoners, at last, to where the precinct commander stood, *Dito na*, here!

The four prisoners rose hunched, gripping the bars. I didn't know who was who. They appeared ghostly, in a gray blur.

"Don't cry!" the voice woke me up. It was Jovito Salonga's strict command to me; "Grow up, girl!"

Mother was greeting all four prisoners at once, urging them to "Please," eat all the cook's menu, sorry in *fiambreras*, not on china, but promising them nicer meals every day.

Funny, I thought, as if they're to stay there for months or years. I was told to unwrap the rice paper and start writing chicken scratch—names, addresses, trusted relatives, friends, where have they evacuated? How to get there, do they need funds? Mickey Mouse or original Philippine peso? So like her, the matriarch of our Binondo to Tondo clans.

To Mr. Pagulayan, the Naric rice, she assured him, was still "safe" with our own Milagros rice pearls.

To Mr. Sycip, she probably confided Binondo news.

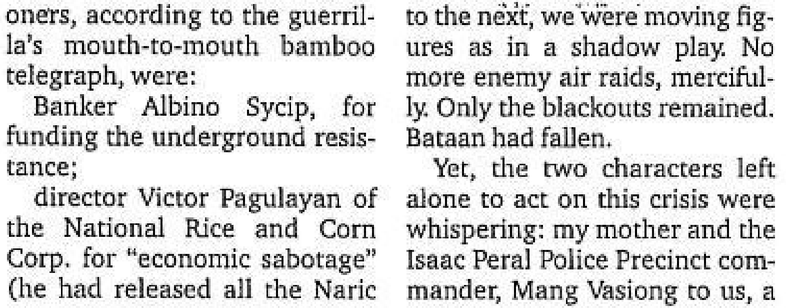
I was chattering silly about learning to cook *palitao*, and having gone beyond A—AARD vark/*amanuensis*—in the (banned) Webster English Dictionary I had sneaked away in our air-raid shelter.

All to show I was now the serious student of Mr. Jovito Salonga. Even boasting that I felt like a natural wartime pigeon message-carrier flying with rice-paper messages… Ha! Long before these rice papers reached those families, all four were prisoners in Muntinlupa.

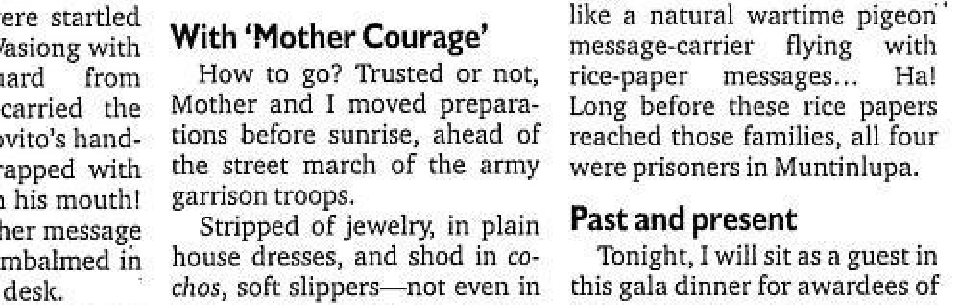
Past and present

Tonight, I will sit as a guest in this gala dinner for awardees of what is called the Asian counterpart of the Nobel Prize. The tables will surely have a gourmet menu laid on china with silver settings. Floral chandeliers will hang over the lit-up grand hall, and music, happy talk and laughter (like mine) would equally embrace us all: the prize awardees, their families, members of the original hero—President Ramon Magsaysay, the guest of honor, a Rockefeller scion, and even the floral architect, I hope.

This paper, "Smuggled—to the cell of prisoners Jovito Salonga et al.," I will place among the gourmet menu, the china, silver and flowers on the table of the Filipino prize awardee, recalling rice paper and scrap of his handwriting in his jail guard's mouth, how he made us survivors from a wartime menu in tin pails, to arrive at this gala dinner, how he freed his people from horrors of prisons, how he bore the wounds of warriors for human rights unto himself, a noble man, who lives and writes like Dr. José P. Rizal.



SALONGA receives the Magsaysay Award medal from Chief Justice Reynato Puno. ROMY HOMILLADA



SALONGA (foreground) with other Liberal Party stalwarts minutes before the infamous Plaza Miranda bombing in 1971

La Naval caretaker

From page D1

four seats inside the plane.

Although his dream of greener pastures in a foreign land has been postponed indefinitely, three of his four children are now working abroad. In September 2004, his wife Norma was diagnosed with Stage-4 colon cancer and the doctors gave her only three months to live. In June 2007, all medical tests showed no signs of the disease.

Canonical coronation

This year is especially significant to Mang Rolly because it is the Centennial of the Canonical Coronation of La Naval. Crowned in 1907 on orders of Pope Pius X, La Naval was the first Marian icon in the Philippines to be so canonically crowned. The coronation drew the biggest crowd during its time and was attended by dignitaries from the Asian churches.

This year, Mang Rolly will once again prepare the Virgen La Naval for a once-in-a-lifetime commemoration of her canonical coronation. This time he expects no more voices or whispers coming from an old lady. The special favors he and his family have received through the years are more than enough proof of our Lady's unceasing patronage.

The request from an old lady that he might have heard years ago, "*Huwag mo akong pababayaan*" continues to ring true in his heart of hearts with the realization that the Virgen La Naval will never forsake him, "*Hindi kita pababayaan.*"

For details of the activities to mark the Centennial of the Canonical Coronation of La Naval next month, call Santo Domingo Church at 7126271-72. Donations are still being accepted.

MANG Rolly has been serving the Virgen de La Naval for 30 years.

Moving in spirit

AN APHORISM GOES, "in prayer you talk to God, in silence He answers."

This is the theme of Douglas Nierras Powerdance (DNPD) "Panalangin" (Prayer) series, an hour-long anthology of his spiritual choreographies.

"Panalangin" is a paean to the journey within. Driven by his intense faith in God, Nierras seamlessly merges classical and contemporary music with evocative movements in modern dance. The works reveal the various emotions from joy to sorrow that man undergoes while searching for Him.

POWERDANCE in action

In "Requiem," Nierras goes beyond the literal meaning of "Prayer for the Dead." The duet reveals how in the light of mortality, one faces denial, anger, bargaining and acceptance before becoming peaceful which means coming to terms with the self.

"Tenderness," an audience favorite, is a perfect example of how dance kindles the connectedness, communion and spiritual experience of a group or an individual. Its sculptural quality and suave gestures portray dance as a metaphor to kissing the hand of God. Through outbursts of movement and robust energy,

"Lux Eterna" is an imagery of how God is a powerful light.

"Salamin ng Buhay" shows the dark side of human nature and how our actions sow what they reap as dancers mirror each other's movements.

In "Ave Maria," Mary dances over the slain body of Jesus after the crucifixion. An ode to motherhood, she is depicted as in control in the midst of a tragedy.

"Coroner's Report" humanizes the "Passions of Christ" by portraying an autopsy of the victim's body in the hospital emergency room. It starts paradoxically with the birth of a child as the victim is rushed to the hospital. The autopsy is interpreted through movement as dancers portray the victim's massacred organs. Yet the report states that the victim's face was peaceful, unaffected by the savagery.

"Gloria" is an ecstatic ensemble work of the soul's ecstatic union with God after a long search.

The company takes a moment to pray before performances or spend time in silence. Consequently, Nierras' modern dance vocabulary radiates organically from their bodies. In "Panalangin," dance becomes a vibrant tool for awakening the subtle forces and energies of life.

"Panalangin" has been going on outreach programs and has performed in schools and institutions. Call 9958287.

DURING the penultimate La Naval grand procession, the Tiples sings the famous "Despedia ala Virgen" (or "Adios"), rearranged by National Artist Lucio D. San Pedro to include tenor and baritone voices in a mixed-choir setting so that the Tiples could be joined by Dominican seminarians and friars in the singing.

Angelic voices for La Naval

From page D1

The Maestro's new arrangement, based faithfully on the original score, was used on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of "La Naval," as reckoned from the naval victory of the Catholic Filipinos and Spaniards over the vastly superior Calvinist Dutch armada in 1646. The spectacular victory was ascribed to the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary, who has since been praised and exalted as the Nuestra Señora del Santissimo Rosario, La Naval de Manila.

Kudos to the Saraza brothers

The Saraza brothers, Diomedes, Jr. and Ivan, who are both violinists pursuing their study in New York, impressed Manila's music lovers in their homecoming concert recently at the St. Scholastica's College St. Cecilia's Hall. The two played a concerto each, Wieniawski's Violin Concerto No.1 in F-sharp Minor, Op. 14 for the younger Junior, and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64 for the older Ivan. The Manila Symphony Orchestra (MSO), conducted by Prof. Arturo Molina, who used to be the violinists' teacher, provided the collaboration.

The two had gained much from their study abroad—Diomedes Jr. at the Mannes School of Music and Ivan at Nyack College.

In particular, Junior showed much technical prowess, his interpretative sensibility noticeably evolving. These he keenly showed in Niccolo Paganini's variation, "God Save the Queen," a virtuoso piece that showcases pyrotechnical brilliance. The concerto he played was similarly scored, what with those double-stops, pizzicati, harmonics, and the like. He played with gusto as if there was no tomorrow. Thunderous applause greeted him at the end.

Ivan, on the other hand, had a mature lyrical sound, solid and striking. He revealed this in Cesar Franck's "Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano," in collaboration with pianist Greg Zuniega. Rapport was impeccable, and listening was a total pleasure. One savored more his elegant lyricism in the Mendelssohn concerto, which he correctly played without pause in between movements with the MSO. His playing flowed with ease, delineating the entire work with broad dispatch. Both brothers were at home with the MSO under Molina's baton with whom they played before their New York stint.

The program notes, written in easy prose by Ida Anita Q. del Mundo, intelligently informs the audience about the pieces to be performed. A violinist and member of the MSO, Ms. Del Mundo, who writes with flair, should continue writing program notes for MSO's concerts. Intelligent program notes are invaluable guide to well-informed listening. The Saraza brothers are for keeps.

Who will be the next Slimmers World's
MR. & MS. GREAT BODIES 2007?

SLIMMERS WORLD
GREAT BODIES 2007

MANILA – The biggest fitness competition in Asia and the Pacific returns, this time, bringing life to the magnificence of ancient Egypt. Slimmers World's Mr. & Ms. Great Bodies 2007 marks its 13th and biggest year ever.

The event kicks off with a press launch on October 23, 2007 at the Centerstage Theatre of SM Mall of Asia introducing the official candidates from all over 13 centers of Slimmers World nationwide.

Mr. & Ms. Great Bodies celebrates total beauty at its finest and fitness and health at its peak just as the ancient Egyptians venerated both physical and spiritual beauty. Alongside the title of Mr. and Ms. Great Bodies, winners get more than PhP 100,000 cash each. 2nd and 3rd runners up will also get big cash prizes and gift products.

Previous winners count celebrities Jacquie Lou Blanco, Carlos Morales; athletes Emerson Obiena and Josephine So; GMA7 News Anchor Lala Roque; and commercial model Marc Dungo. Finalists include such luminaries as Chinggay Andrada, Ivy Violan, Maita Ejercito and top models of the country.

This year, Slimmers World International promises to offer twice the spectacle and twice the adventure as it shows off 24 candidates who will strut their wares in the finals night to be held on December 1, 6 p.m. at the PICC Plenary Hall.

All candidates will be judged according to the following criteria: Physique and Creative Posing 30%; Aerobics 20%; Fitness Profile 20%; Personality 10%; Projection 10%; and Audience Impact 10%.

Mr. & Ms. Great Bodies Candidates are: (Male) Joselito Acuña of ADRIATICO, Michael Apacible of ALABANG, James Mark Banzon of MEGAMALL, Stephen Roman Chua and Reuben Dustin Uy of GREENHILLS, Alfredo Danganan of PASAY ROAD, Randall Lim of BINONDO, Cax Mayuga of PASIG, Rodel Sariño of LEGASPI, Sunny Sarmiento of SM NORTH EDSA, John Andrew Schimmer and Antonio Sulit of TRAFALGAR; (Female) Dwan Abantao of SM NORH EDSA, Rodelia Canono, Celestina Dimalanta and Maria Raquel Fabor of PASIG, Cherrye Caringal of TRAFALGAR, Myrna Consing of GREENHILLS, Carol Donato of MEGAMALL, Ruth Pacheco of SUBIC, Araceli Patricio of LEGASPI, Cely Reaport of CALOOCAN, Rodora Trinchera of PASAY ROAD and Lady Claudette Valenzuela of ALABANG.

The year's most prestigious fitness and beauty event is brought to you only by:

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SLIMMERS WORLD Body spa

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For FREE tickets, please call: 536-2381.

Jonabel Gavieta
Ms. Great Body 2005

Myra Villanueva
Ms. Great Body 2006

Art Guerrero
Mr. Great Body 2005

Johannes Magbitang
Mr. Great Body 2006

Karen Villanueva
Ms. Great Body 2004

Jacqui Lou Blanco
Ms. Great Body 2001

Lala Roque
Ms. Great Body 2004

Carlos Morales
Mr. Great Body 2004

The man behind Slimmers World's success, Ronald Joseph Moy (SWI-PRES.) w/ SWI-VP Helen Manansala - Camacho.

Chinggay Andrada, Finalist, Mr. & Ms. Great Bodies 2002

Some of the celebrities who graced the previous events were: Rachel Lobangco, Rachel Alejandro, DJ Crystal, Paolo Bediones, Mike Enriquez, Eula Valdez, Ricky Lo, Daphne Oseña, Maribeth Bechara & Brad Turvey.

Winners during the awarding ceremony with FSC Managers: Joan Guevarra, Dindin Creencia, Maureen Roy & SWI Directors: Dinah Quinto & Chato Cepeda.

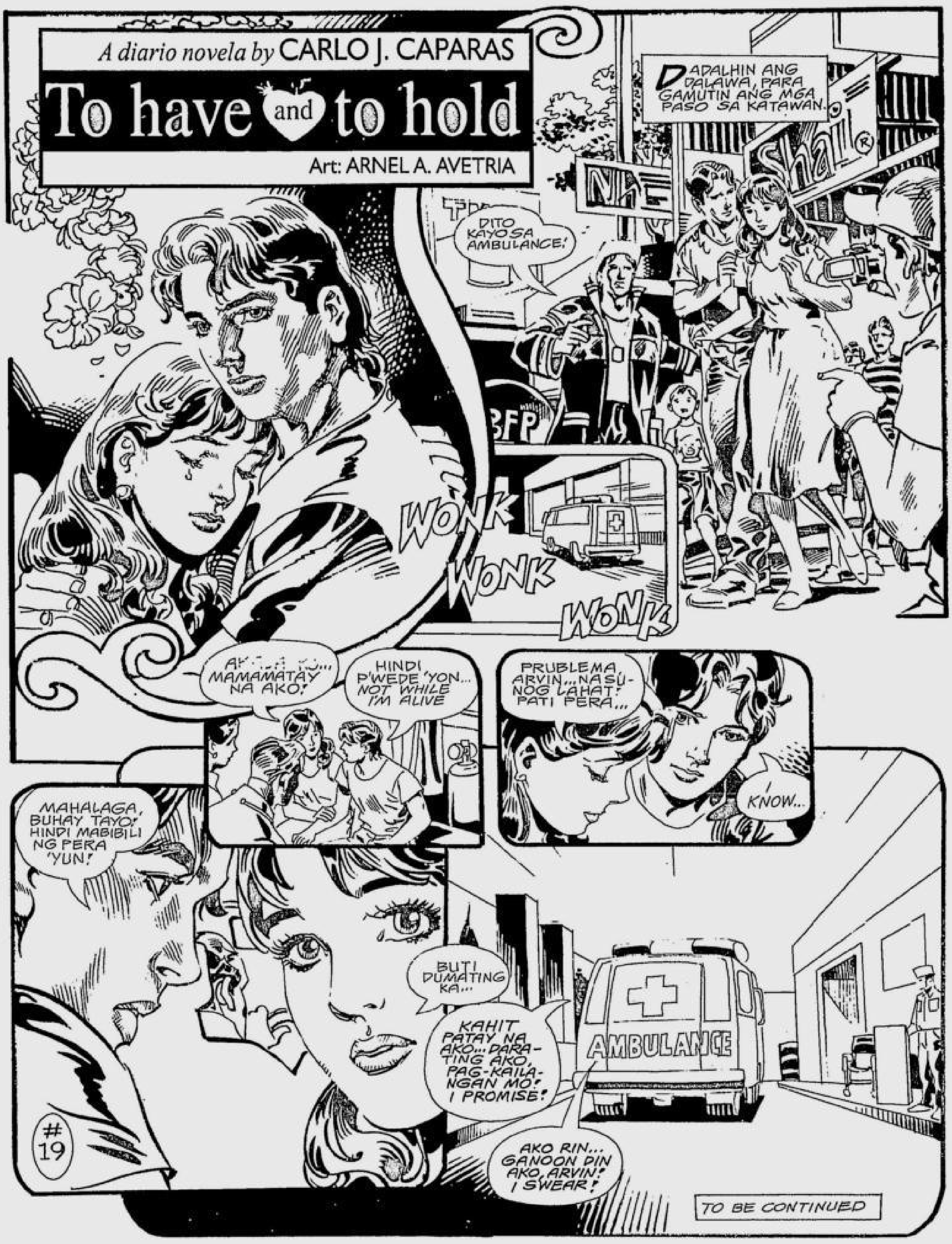
Mr. & Ms. Great Bodies 2002 Emerson Obiena & Josephine So.

Mr. & Ms. Great Bodies 2006 being awarded by SWI-VP Ms. Helen Manansala - Camacho & CEO Mr. Ronald Joseph Moy.

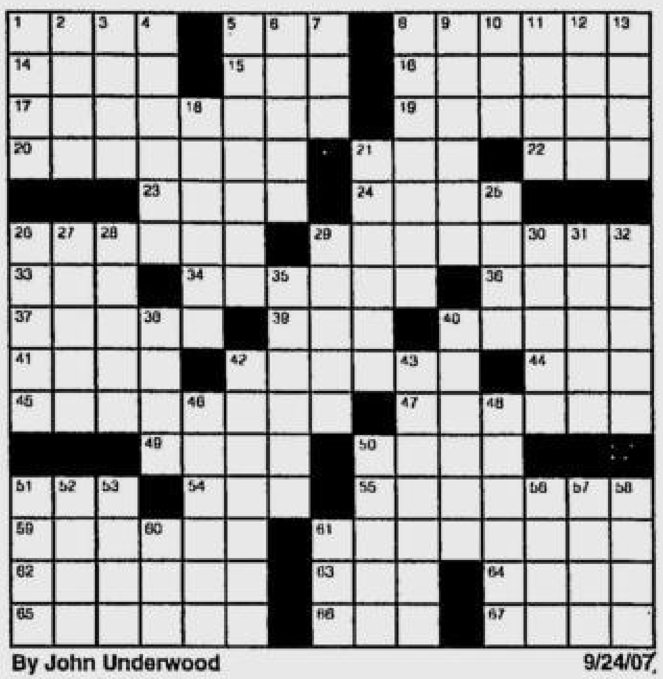
A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA


DADALHIN ANG DALAWA, PARA GAMUTIN ANG MGA PASO SA KATAWAN.
DITO KAYO SA AMBULANCE!
BFP
WONK
WONK
WONK
AKO... MAMAMATAY NA AKO!
HINDI P'WEDE 'YON... NOT WHILE I'M ALIVE
PRUBLEMA ARVIN... NASUNOG LAHAT! PATI PERA...
I KNOW...
MAHALAGA, BUHAY TAYO! HINDI MABIBILI NG PERA 'YUN!
BUTI DUMATING KA...
KAHIT PATAY NA AKO... DARATING AKO, PAG-KAILANGAN MO! I PROMISE!
AMBULANCE
AKO RIN... GANOON DIN AKO, ARVIN! I SWEAR!
#19
TO BE CONTINUED

DAILY CROSSWORD



By John Underwood
New York, NY
9/24/07

ACROSS

1 Dry African riverbed
5 Indent key
8 Staircase type
14 Grace ending
15 Arctic explorer John
16 Novelist LeGuin
17 Raucous party
19 Cry like a baby
20 Flabbergast
21 Major ISP
22 Notes of scales
23 Take a fall
24 Lively pace
26 Fast crowd
29 Crown colony until 1997
33 Point: pref.
34 Sweet, sticky liquids
36 Scent
37 Day of songs
39 William Tell's canton
40 Like me
41 Abel's nephew
42 Winter vehicle
44 R-V connection
45 Petula Clark's big hit
47 Can opener
49 Spanish snack
50 Eugene O'Neill's daughter
51 Flow out
54 Your, of yore
55 Inert medication
59 Fruity cocktail
61 Helter-skelter
62 "__ Butterfly"
63 Sister's sib
64 Parched
65 Model Kim
66 Swed. transporters
67 Uh-uh

DOWN

1 Muted trumpet sound
2 Author of "Lucky Jim"
3 Small ding
4 Bullion bars
5 First nuclear bomb test
6 Supermarket chain
7 Solicit alms
8 Hires a hit man, e.g.
9 A.I. language
10 Late starter?
11 Essen's river
12 Burn balm
13 S.E. Asian country
18 Coercion
21 Like a hereditary condition
25 Ring calls
26 World-weary
27 Low-budget prefix
28 "The Burden of Proof" author
29 Saginaw Bay's lake
30 Pindar, for one
31 Greet silently
32 Cluster
35 Models' ramp
38 Ain't right?
40 Lacking a key
42 Streep film, "__ Choice"
43 Hunks
46 Japanese mat
48 Video-game classic
50 Puccini work
51 Austen heroine
52 False god
53 Wait patiently
56 Architect Saarinen
57 Radar image
58 Quaint, quaintly
60 Withholding sum
61 "Nova" network

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

R	A	P	T	O	R	■	P	L	A	C	A	T	E	R
E	N	R	O	B	E	■	N	E	P	A	L	E	S	E
S	T	A	T	I	C	■	E	N	T	R	E	A	T	Y
C	O	N	S	T	I	T	U	T	E	D	■	T	O	N
A	N	C	■	■	T	I	M	E	S	■	D	I	N	A
L	I	E	U	T	E	N	A	N	T	■	E	M	I	R
E	N	S	N	A	R	E	S	■	■	P	L	E	A	D
■	■	■	P	U	S	S	■	T	R	O	T	■	■	■
C	E	R	E	S	■	■	M	Y	E	L	I	T	I	S
A	V	O	N	■	O	P	A	L	E	S	C	E	N	T
N	I	B	S	■	P	O	L	E	D	■	■	S	T	A
O	D	E	■	D	I	S	T	R	I	B	U	T	O	R
P	E	R	M	E	A	T	E	■	T	I	S	A	N	E
U	N	T	E	S	T	E	D	■	E	L	A	T	E	R
S	T	A	L	K	E	R	S	■	D	E	F	E	R	S

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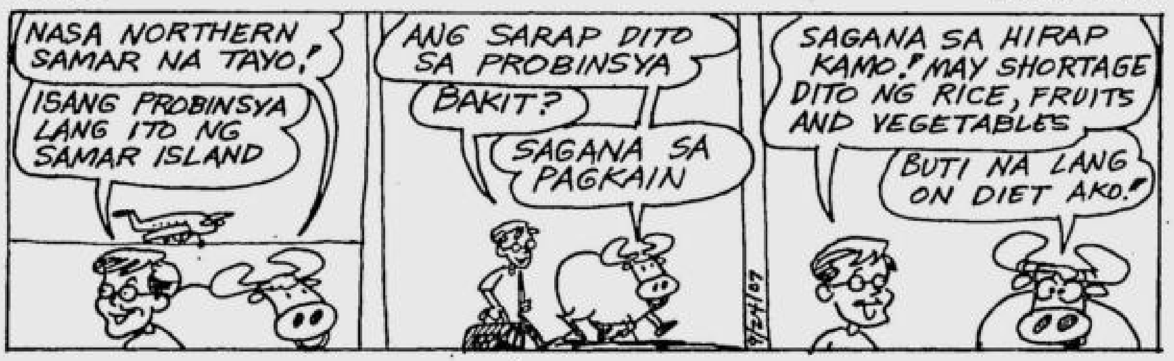
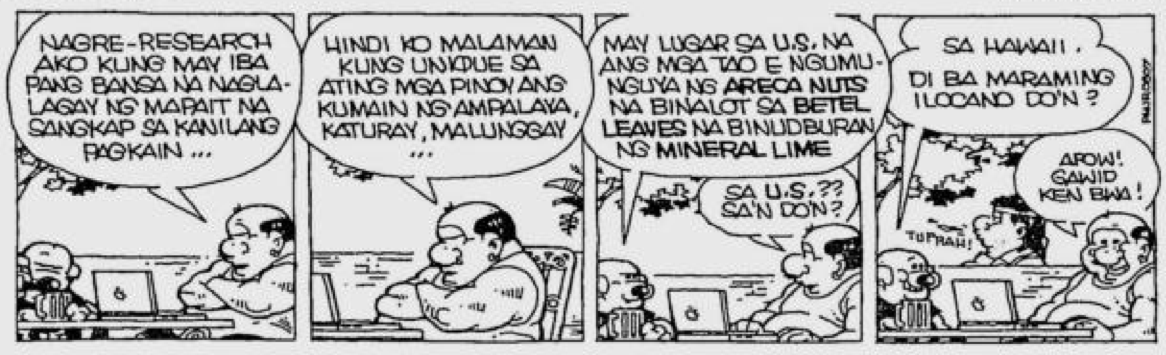
9/24/07

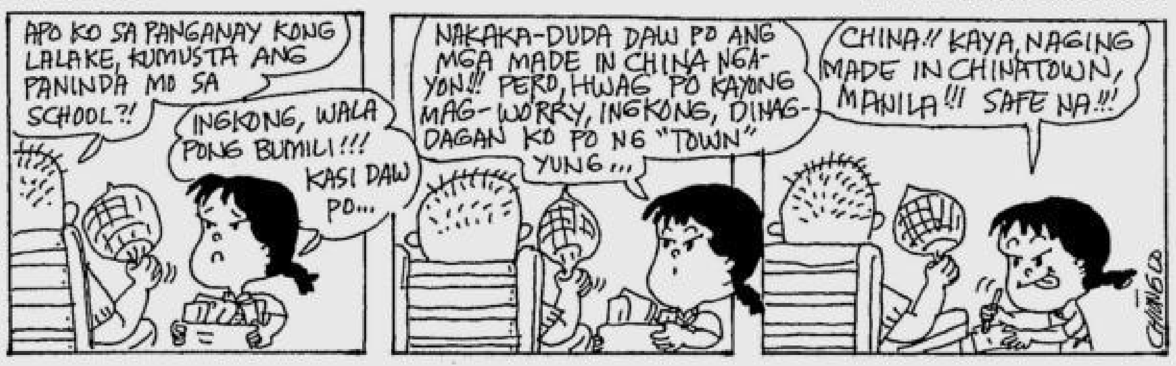
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


NASA NORTHERN SAMAR NA TAYO!
ISANG PROBINSYA LANG ITO NG SAMAR ISLAND
ANG SARAP DITO SA PROBINSYA
BAKIT?
SAGANA SA PAGKAIN
9/24/07
SAGANA SA HIRAP KAMO! MAY SHORTAGE DITO NG RICE, FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
BUTI NA LANG ON DIET AKO!

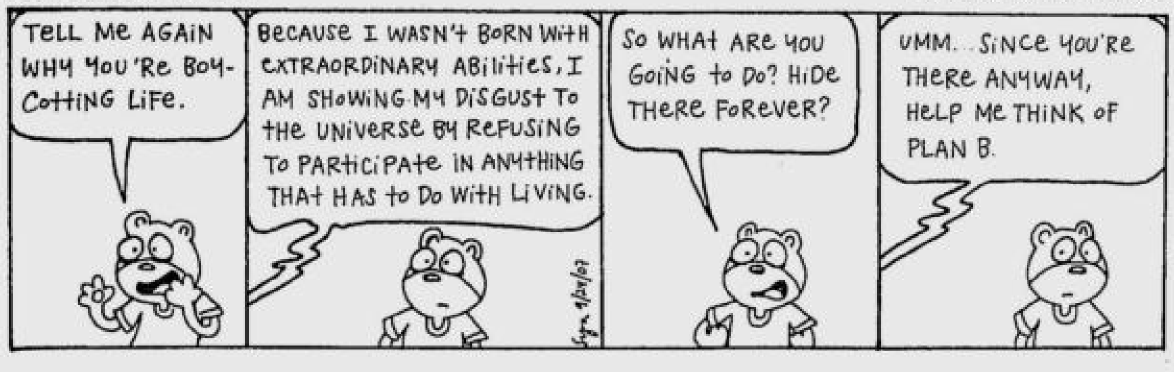
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAGRE-RESEARCH AKO KUNG MAY IBA PANG BANSA NA NAGLALAGAY NG MAPAIT NA SANGKAP SA KANILANG PAGKAIN ...
HINDI KO MALAMAN KUNG UNIQUE SA ATING MGA PINOY ANG KUMAIN NG AMPALAYA, KATURAY, MALUNGGAY ...
MAY LUGAR SA U.S. NA ANG MGA TAO E NGUMUNGUYA NG ARECA NUTS NA BINALOT SA BETEL LEAVES NA BINUDBURAN NG MINERAL LIME
SA U.S.?? SA'N DON?
SA HAWAII.
DI BA MARAMING ILOCANO DO'N ?
AROW! GAWID KEN BWA!
TUPRAH!

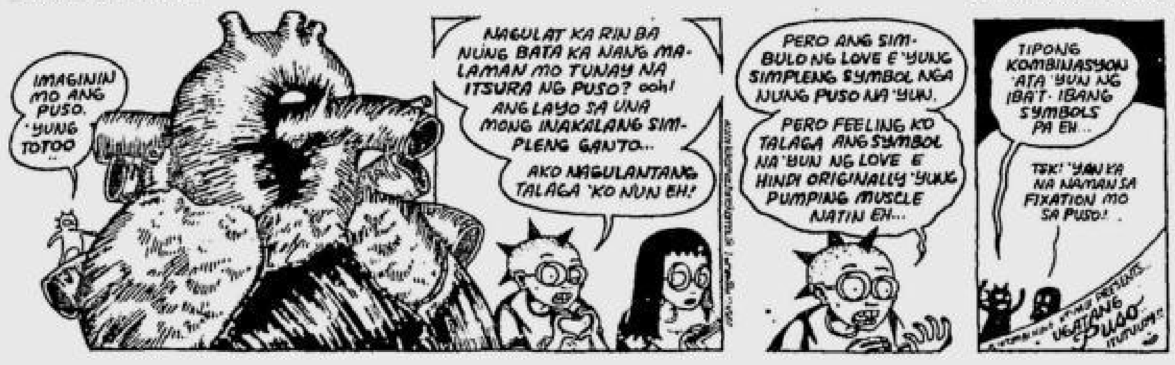
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


APO KO SA PANGANAY KONG LALAKE, KUMUSTA ANG PANINDA MO SA SCHOOL?!
INGKONG, WALA PONG BUMILI!!!
KASI DAW PO...
NAKAKA-DUDA DAW PO ANG MGA MADE IN CHINA NGAYON!!! PERO, HWAG PO KAYONG MAG-WORRY, INGKONG, DINAGDAGAN KO PO NG "TOWN" YUNG...
CHINA!! KAYA, NAGING MADE IN CHINATOWN, MANILA!!! SAFE NA!!!
CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


TeLL Me AGAIN WHY You'Re BoyCottiNG LiFe.
Because I WASN't BoRN With eXTRAORDINARY ABilities, I AM SHoWiNG My DiSGust To the UNiVeRSe By ReFuSiNG To PARTiCiPAte iN ANyTHiNG THAt HAS to Do With LiViNG.
So WHAt ARe You GoiNG to Do? HiDe THeRe FoReVeR?
UMM... SiNCe You'Re THeRe ANyWAY, HeLP Me THiNK oF PLAN B.

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


IMAGININ MO ANG PUSO. 'YUNG TOTOO
NAGULAT KA RIN BA NUNG BATA KA NANG MALAMAN MO TUNAY NA ITSURA NG PUSO? ooh! ANG LAYO SA UNA MONG INAKALANG SIMPLENG GANTO...
AKO NAGULANTANG TALAGA 'KO NUN EH!
PERO ANG SIMBULO NG LOVE E 'YUNG SIMPLENG SYMBOL NGA NUNG PUSO NA 'YUN.
PERO FEELING KO TALAGA ANG SYMBOL NA 'BUN NG LOVE E HINDI ORIGINALLY 'YUNG PUMPING MUSCLE NATIN EH...
TIPONG KOMBINASYON ATA 'YUN NG IBA'T-IBANG SYMBOLS PA EH...
TSK! 'YAN KA NA NAMAN SA FIXATION MO SA PUSO!
UGATANG PUSO

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

6	5			4			1	3
7								9
			1	6	2			
		3	5		7	9		
1		4				8		7
		6	4		8	1		
			9	7	6			
9								8
3	1			8			9	6

Difficulty Level ★
9/24

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Answer to previous puzzle

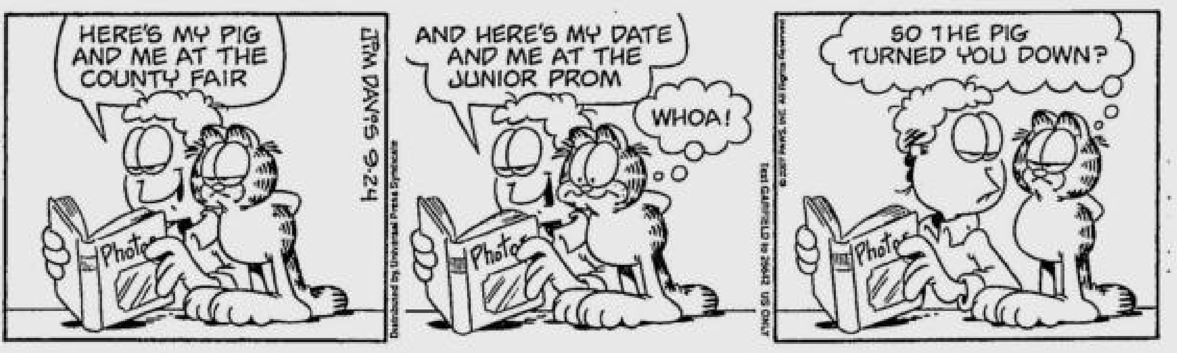
5	9	1	4	7	8	3	2	6
4	6	3	9	2	5	7	1	8
2	7	8	6	3	1	5	9	4
7	8	5	2	1	6	9	4	3
9	2	4	5	8	3	6	7	1
1	3	6	7	9	4	8	5	2
6	1	7	8	4	9	2	3	5
3	5	2	1	6	7	4	8	9
8	4	9	3	5	2	1	6	7

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS


HERE'S MY PIG AND ME AT THE COUNTY FAIR
Photo
JIM DAVIS 9-24
AND HERE'S MY DATE AND ME AT THE JUNIOR PROM
WHOA!
Photo
SO THE PIG TURNED YOU DOWN?
Photo

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You win others over to you easily because of your diplomacy and charm. You're warm, sociable and friendly. You love luxury and beautiful things. Your life gets better as you get older. Many of you are strongly humanitarian and will work for reform and change for the better. Your year ahead is wonderfully social! Relationships, parties and fun events will flourish.

Birthdate of: Lou Dobbs, journalist; Kevin Sorbo, actor; Nia Vardalos, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Conversations with partners and close friends are particularly meaningful today. You easily see what the other person really is saying or what he or she really wants.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This can be a productive day at work. You see new ways of improving things or introducing reform. Similarly, you might see ways of improving your health.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conversations with children, lovers, sports colleagues and educational experts can really get to the bottom of matters. You'll get the full picture of what is really happening.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is an excellent day to make repairs at home, especially to laundry areas, bathrooms, plumbing and garbage areas. It's also a good day to get rid of stuff you don't need!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're almost a mind-reader today. You see the bottom line right away. You're also particularly convincing and persuasive. (Nobody stands a chance against you.).

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might see entirely new ways of earning money or new sources of income today. Some of you will see ways to improve equipment that you use to make money.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have the mind of a sleuth today! You'll investigate and ask questions about anything you want to know. Whatever you learn actually could change your life for the better.

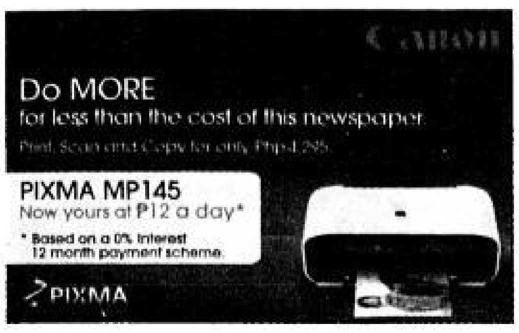
SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a wonderful day for research of any kind. You're determined to get at the reality of things or probe for the deep core of truth of something.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): When talking to others today, if you think you're right, that's it—your ears are closed, and nothing is open to interpretation. (Oops.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Bosses, parents, teachers and VIPs will be impressed with whatever you have to offer today. You could throw a new slant on things.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today you have a strong desire to reflect on the deeper purpose of life. You're not concerned with trivial things. You want big answers to the big questions.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're determined to get to the truth of something today, especially if it relates to shared property or the earnings or wealth of your partner. Nobody can pull the wool over your eyes today!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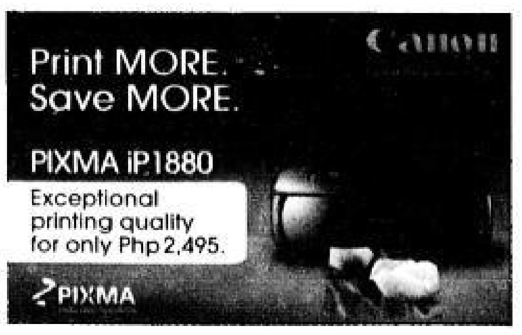
Canon
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Exceptional printing quality for only Php 2,495.
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Three paintings that say, 'I love you'

By Bettina Olmedo
Contributor

ORDINARY GUYS SAY IT with flowers and chocolates. Writers say it with love letters, while artists say it with paintings.

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, many would agree that artists decidedly have an edge when it comes to expressing those three little words.

This will be illustrated in a major exhibition to be mounted by the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Sept. 27-Nov. 8. This will be the first posthumous retrospective show on Onib Olmedo, a major Filipino figurative expressionist whose impact is felt even now. A whole new generation of Filipino artists are self-confessed Olmedo disciples.

The exhibit will feature representative works produced by Olmedo spanning his entire professional career from 1971 till his death in 1996. Included are paintings and sketches from the private collection of Olmedo's immediate family, some of which have never been exhibited in this country, including what has come to be known as the "Vienna Collection," and portraits of his widow and children which relate a love story in the language of art.

Valentine's Day portrait

It was the summer of 1967. I was then immersed in the whirlwind world of advertising, writing copy designed to make consumers buy what companies felt they needed and wanted, in accordance with Pavlov's hierarchy of human desires that fuel all of humankind's behavior.

The account executives were always impeccably attired in their business suits, while the copywriters exuded their angst in outfits that young people nowadays would describe as "cool."

I found the AEs too stuffy and plastic, and the copywriters just downright self-conscious and self-absorbed egotists. To my mind, not one of them could be considered by nubile, fresh graduates like me as "husband material."

And then, one day, my friend, Fe Capellan, who was an AE but did not have the mindset of this advertising specimen, invited me to their family picnic at Hundred Islands in Pangasinan.

And it was at that time that I met the guy with whom I was destined to share my life—Onib Olmedo.

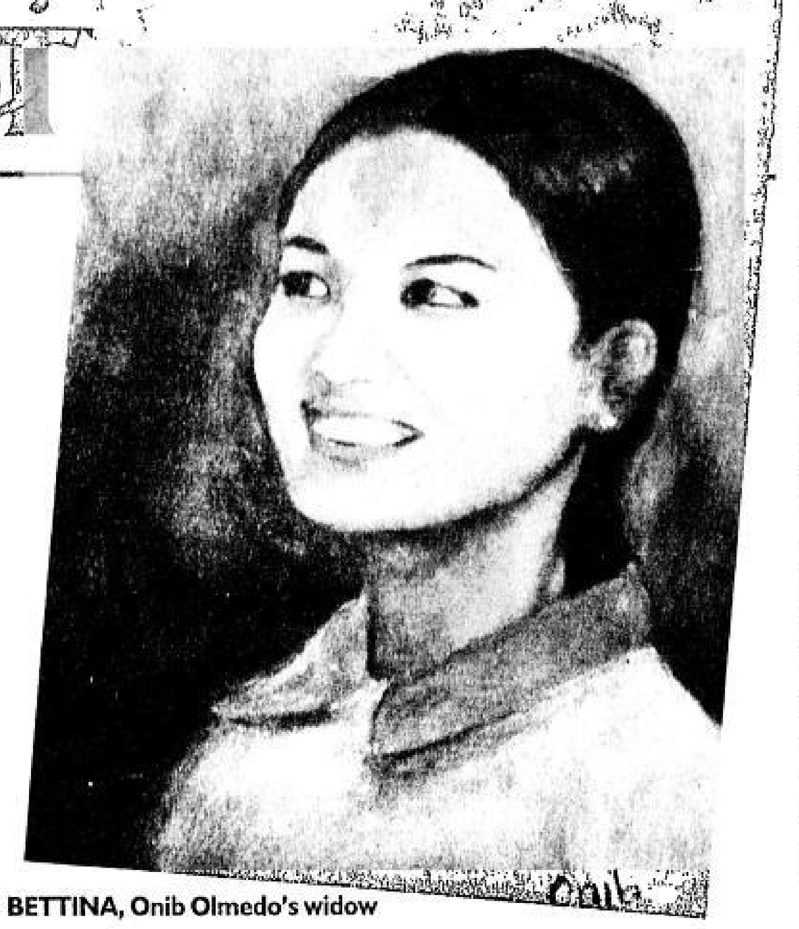
What made him so attractive was the fact that he was the very antithesis of all the people I was working with in advertising.

When we got married, he decided that he had had enough of the structural discipline demanded by architecture, shifting gears in his career path by becoming an artist.

However, he was not at all like the artists I had to collaborate with in the commercial world of advertising. His was a quiet intensity and the authenticity of a perfectly integrated human person.

The paintings he produced were not the pretty, ornamental stuff that we had been

THREE/ E2



BETTINA, Onib Olmedo's widow

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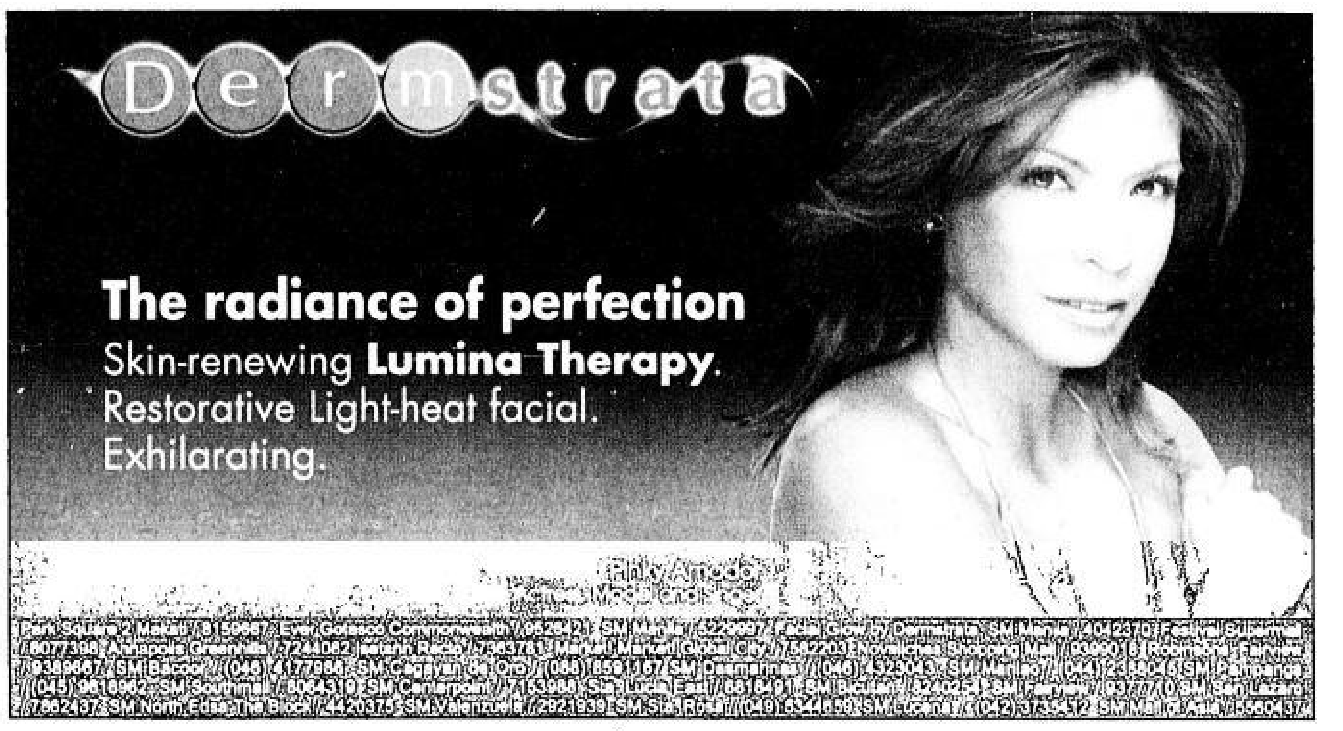
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PISO LA • FRUITS & PASSION
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SDV07-B
See mechanics poster for details

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Promo period Sept 15 to Dec 15, 2007. See posters for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No: 3964 Series of 2007

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto Villalon

Macau's different realities

MACAU IS A PLACE OF many contradictory realities, all happening simultaneously and almost independently of each other. Confined within a total area of around 25 sq km, the Chinese fishing village and former Portuguese colony is established today as the 21st-century gaming capital of Asia, its future anchored on the massive numbers of visitors attracted by its booming casinos.

Macau is a city in perpetual motion. Las Vegas-type casinos continually pump cash throughout the day and night into already fully loaded city coffers. Money, lots of it, and everything that newly earned wealth can buy is everywhere in abundant Macau today.

"The more the better" is the feeling that new Macau generates, and Macau definitely keeps gathering up more and more of everything.

Once confined to small peninsula and its two adjoining islands, land reclamation has continually expanded Macau boundaries. Never has reclamation been carried out as in today's grand, massive and absolutely obsessive scale, it seems that the hunger for more land cannot be sated.

Aggressive reclamation rapidly opens new areas, giving the feeling of incessantly feeding Macau's compulsion to construct more shimmering architectural trophies and casinos, while improving existing public facilities and housing for local residents.

Macau is clearly on a roll.

Reclamation

The reclamation centerpiece is the Cotai Strip where huge casinos and high-rise hotels, some already under construction, stand side by side on wide boulevards, planned as an Asian Las Vegas, an improved version of the original Strip.

New Cotai casinos play the game of architecturally one-upping the neighboring competition with flamboyant super "glitz-and-glitter" structures that follow the dictum that "bigger is always best." So think of what Las Vegas looks like today as Macau leaves it behind in the dust. Macau will just be bigger and best.

LILAU Square frames nostalgic images of Portuguese villages amid the Chinese reality of Macau.

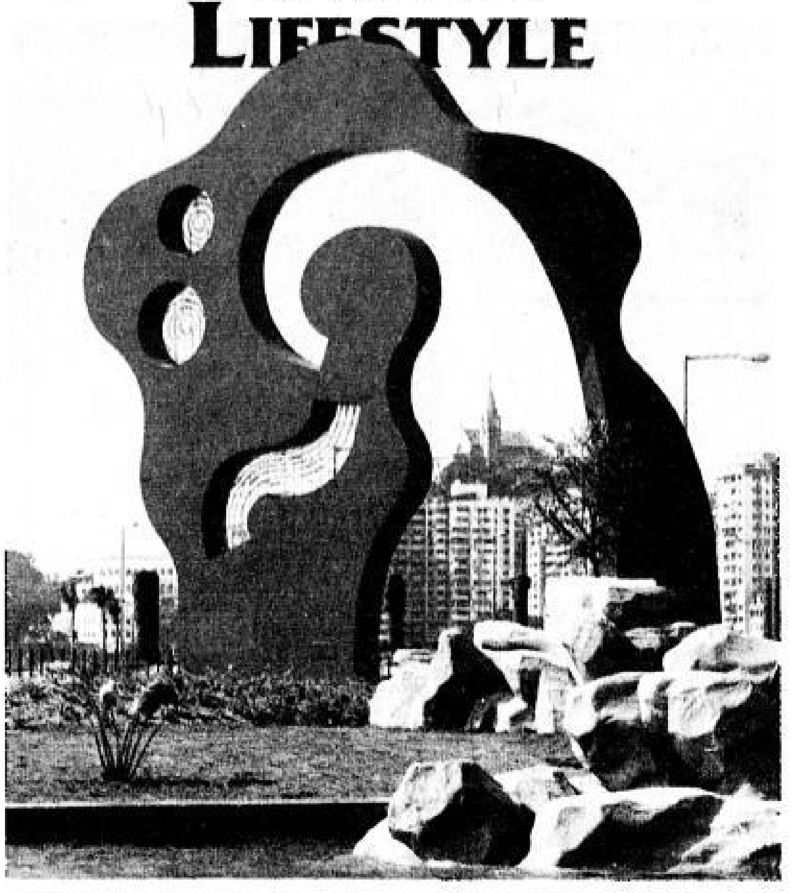
Once Cotai is fully developed, Macau improves its present image of being a vibrant, pulsating city with money coming and going into its many casinos and shops, a strong tourism magnet for China and the region.

On the opposite spectrum of "bigger and better" and "glitz-and-glitter" architecture, Macau pays special attention to its old buildings and streetscapes, recognizing heritage as another resource to add to the tourism picture.

Macau heritage is unique in the region. Centuries of Chinese-Portuguese interaction is so evident in every phase of Macau life, from language to religion, arts, cuisine and urbanscapes, that make it stand out in the region as the only city with this type of cultural fusion.

Outstanding program

With the goal of inscribing the center of Macau in the prestigious Unesco World Heritage List, the government established an outstanding program to recuperate its decaying Chinese and colonial heritage.



STRIKING art not only place-marks the new open areas of Macau but also declares the city's embracing the 21st century.

The heritage values of structures were studied, documented, categorized. Finally significant structures illustrating the "Macau story" were grouped together.

Since it was discovered that most structures were located along a tight road network running through the central Macau area, distinctive street paving was laid out, linking most heritage monuments on a spine of pedestrianized streets, an ingenious and effective urban-planning scheme.

Not only were heritage structures conserved, their urban surroundings were cleaned up and improved to make them stand out better. Parking lots, tourist stalls, badly paved streets and sidewalks around pre-conservation heritage structures were removed, redesigned or replaced with landscaped open spaces, and in some instances existing plazas in front of heritage structures were framed with newly constructed colonnades that hid tourist stalls while allowing them to continue business.

The detailed methods followed by the Macau Cultural Institute satisfied the most exacting internationally upheld requirements of heritage conservation, leading to the inscription of the Historic Center of Macau in the World Heritage List in 2005.

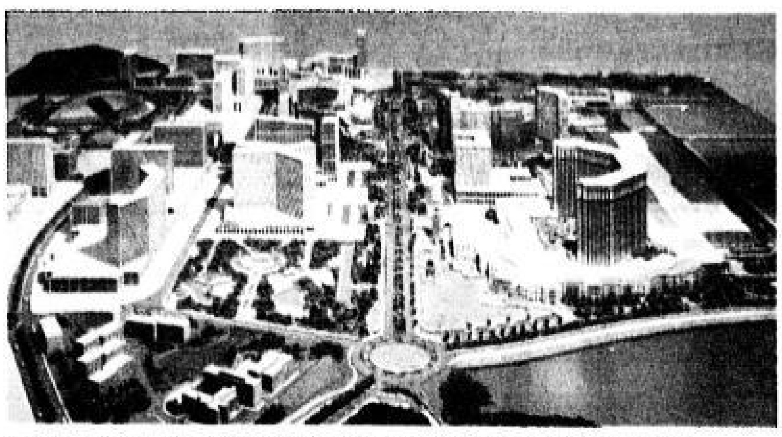
Sophisticated

Very sophisticated is the reuse of Macau heritage structures. Heritage buildings have been converted into offices, shops, boutique hotels and museums.

Also very sophisticated is the way that totally modern structures are grafted onto heritage structures, as seen in the addition at the rear of the landmark Sir Robert Hotung Library. Macau's reuse program shows an understanding of using heritage to enhance contemporary living.

But if authentic heritage is not enough, Macau has plenty of instant heritage. It is also a heritage fantasyland. New hotels allude to European royalty: a replica of Queen Elizabeth's carriage is parked outside the front door of one hotel; and in full view of the oversized pseudo monarchial portraits hanging in its mirrored, gilt-encrusted lobby, a pair of Buckingham Palace Guards in full costume march back and forth.

Equally instant and absolute fantasy is Fisherman's Wharf. On an esplanade jutting out into the water, an enormous development of convention facilities, restaurants, bars, shops all spread around an amusement park with replicas of Vesuvius (which erupts every hour on the hour, spewing fake fire and real smoke with lots of sound effects!), Lhasa's Potala Palace, Colosseo of Rome, Eiffel Tower of course, and Tower of London.



WHEN the ambitious Cotai development on reclaimed land is complete, Macau takes place as the 21st-century gaming capital of Asia, or, possibly, of the world.

There are Moorish, Tudor, Portuguese and Chinese Villages, a Wild West area and the Latin Quarter of New Orleans. It's a place where one can "travel" around an encapsulated world, taste all kinds of "local" cuisine depending on which quarter of Fisherman's Wharf he is in, and shop away in the tempting collection of high-priced boutiques. A great diversion, Fisherman's Wharf, and a perfect destination for those looking for that kind of reality.

Too perfect?

On the other hand, the conservation of authentic Macau heritage returns old structures to a state of near perfection, making them appear as if they were constructed yesterday rather than being centuries-old. With most of the patina removed, the conserved structures sometimes appear as brand new as Fisherman's Wharf recreations.

Do the realities of "new" and "old" and "fantasy and authentic" overlap in Macau?

There is no overlap with continuing traditions in everyday Macau life. Away from the tourist tracks and despite overnight modernization, parents still walk their children to school, shop for supplies in markets, corner shops, or street stalls for fresh produce, slurp bowls of hot noodles on sidewalk stands for a quick lunch, pick up laundry after returning from work, and later, back in their flats, watch television in the evenings.

Buildings in areas like these are not grand, nor are they sparkling clean or new, but they have the character of life. They tell the other half of the Macau story not seen in the casino strip or the heritage walk, the story that behind all the glitz the everyday life of Macau goes on.

Young and old still gather in public parks. Children play while adults do tai chi or practice Chinese opera arias singing under the open air in full voice. I am told that shops specializing in traditional paper lanterns for seasonal Chinese festivals still exist. Craftsmen still fashion birdcages in the old way. Men bring their caged birds to tea shops where birds sing to each other from the safety of their cages while their masters noisily exchange the new gossip of the day.

The other face of Macau is what I want to see next time I go, to experience the personal reality instead of the official tourist version of Macau. On the other hand, there's a reality check here: walking into personal Macau may be straying off limits, intruding into someone's home without an invitation.

Where is the demarcation between tourism and community privacy?

Heritage watch

The Manila Office of the Macau Government Tourism Office is sponsoring a traveling lecture series and photo exhibit of Macau architecture. First lecture was at University of the Philippines College of Architecture last Sept. 13. Other lectures: Mapúa on Oct. 15, University of Santo Tomas on Nov. 26 and Far Eastern University on Nov. 27.

Visit www.macautourism.gov.mo or e-mail mgtophil@info.com.ph

E-mail the author at pride.place@gmail.com

Three paintings . . .

From page E1

superficially exposed to in our Humanities classes at St. Theresa's. In fact, they were all distorted and utterly disturbing, such that Filipino art collectors would be puzzled, frightened and even repelled by them.

This was in the swinging '60s, when Filipinos had developed a taste only for the vibrant and colorful images of Philippine genre art depicting indigenous themes like town fiestas, planting and harvesting rituals, religious festivals and the folklore of a people who are perpetually smiling, although they may be weeping inside.

It was, therefore, with a certain amount of trepidation that I unveiled the portrait he had painstakingly painted as a gift for our first Valentine's Day celebration as a couple.

To my surprise, however, what I saw was a portrait done in a purely realistic style. In fact, he said he had based it on one of my black-and-white photographs which he projected on the white wall of his studio for enlargement.

All my artsy-fartsy friends, however, tell me that I should hide this painting, because it is not at all representative of his style. I just ignore their comments, because I know that making an exception for his wife through a realistic portrait that does not distort her feature, is a figurative expressionist's unique way of saying, "I love you"—something which cannot be duplicated by the usual way of expressing those three little words.

Daddy's girl

Like this portrait, there were two others he produced as an expression of love for the people who were nearest and dearest to his heart: our two daughters.

Bambi, the older one, looks exactly like her father but is more like me in terms of personality traits, being exuberant, ebullient, caring but also fiercely determined to stand up for her rights and convictions.

Franjo took after her father, being kind, gentle, compassionate and generous to a fault. She was his alterego. They were kindred spirits who spoke the same language.

Franjo, of all the members of the huge Olmedo clan, is the only one who really understands and appreciates her father's art. The two of them would spend hours discussing his paintings, the nuances of the distorted floor tiles, the chair intertwined with a girl, the haunting images on his canvas—with skeletal features and X-ray anatomies that brought the viewer into the dark recesses of tormented human souls.

In stark contrast to these images is Onib's portrait of her rendered in ink. It captures the sweet innocence and the magical, albeit fleeting, joys of adolescence. As in other signature Onib paintings, the eyes say it all—they have a look of softness and tenderness.

In them are distilled the defining moments in a young girl's life: the exciting but intimidating prospects of unknown territory represented by the first day in school; the jitters attending her first performance in a class play and her first unchaperoned date at the junior-senior prom; the exhilaration of venturing into her first coed university after years of a cloistered existence at a convent school.

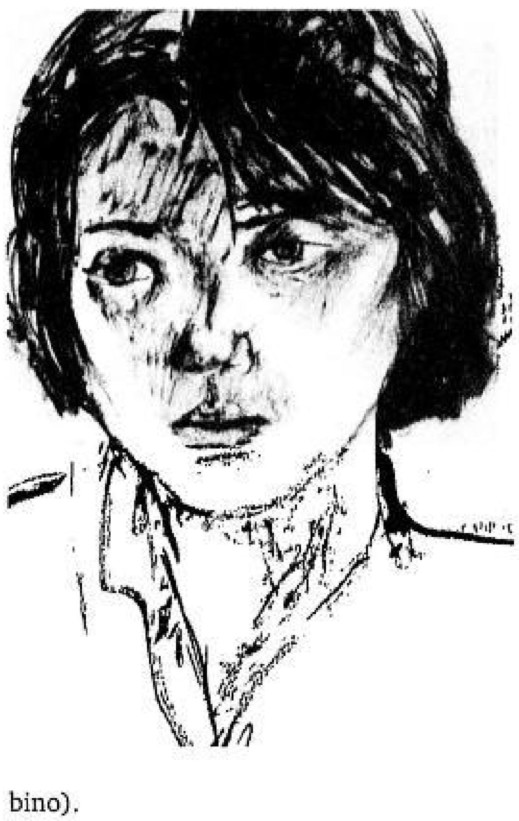
The portrait exudes the shy but hopeful aura of youth looking into the future which holds the distant promise of dreams fulfilled and expectations realized.

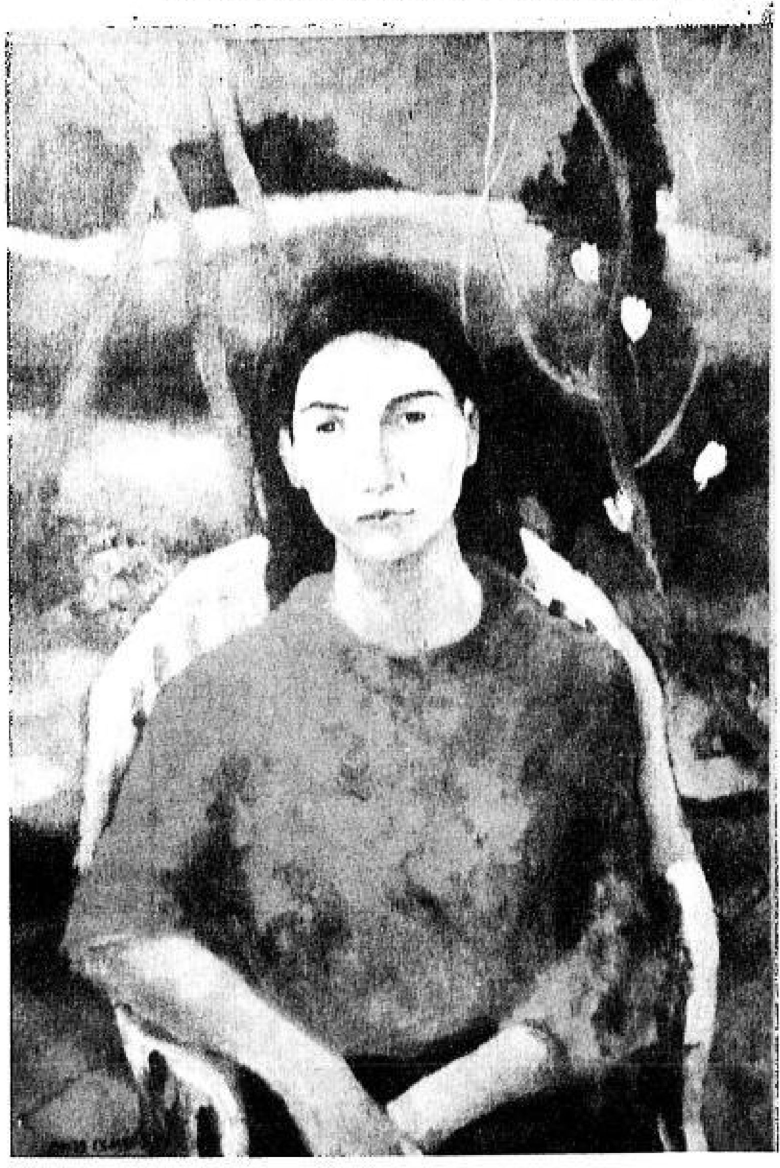
The portrait evokes happy memories of funny moments and momentous experiences—the way Onib would relate to his daughter his own, unique version of nursery rhymes and fairy tales, changing "Jack and the Beanstalk" to Jack and a can of Purefoods pork and beans—a story that Franjo would adamantly adhere to, to the consternation of her teacher; the day he followed in the family car as Franjo drove off with her escort to the prom; the day he rejoiced at Franjo's decision to pursue a medical career, although he entailed some yucky experiences, like opening the refrigerator and seeing the carcass of a cat for dissection in her anatomy class.

He didn't live long enough to witness her graduation from medical school and her recitation of the Hippocratic oath, but the portrait he made of his daughter captures the triumph of a shy, young girl who was never afraid to dream and to pursue her dream to fruition.

Her father's daughter

The third portrait in the retrospective exhibit is that of Bambi, short for Bambina, derived from Onib's own nickname (Bambino).





TOP, FRANJO, Olmedo's younger daughter; above: Bambi, Olmedo's older daughter

Bambi is all sugar-and-spice in appearance, but she is iron-and-steel when it comes to determination. A physical replica of her dad, she also inherited his artistic genes. Her portrait in acrylic on canvas compels the viewer with eyes that speak of her iron will and steely determination.

The painting lets Bambi's character shine through, evoking memories of instances when she showed her tenacity. Although Onib allowed her to take driving lessons, he prohibited her from driving the car when nobody else was around. Bambi, however, stuck to her guns, something which proved to be beneficial to the whole family whenever a driver was not available, considering that her mom's and sister's intelligence are not of the street-smart, spatial type.

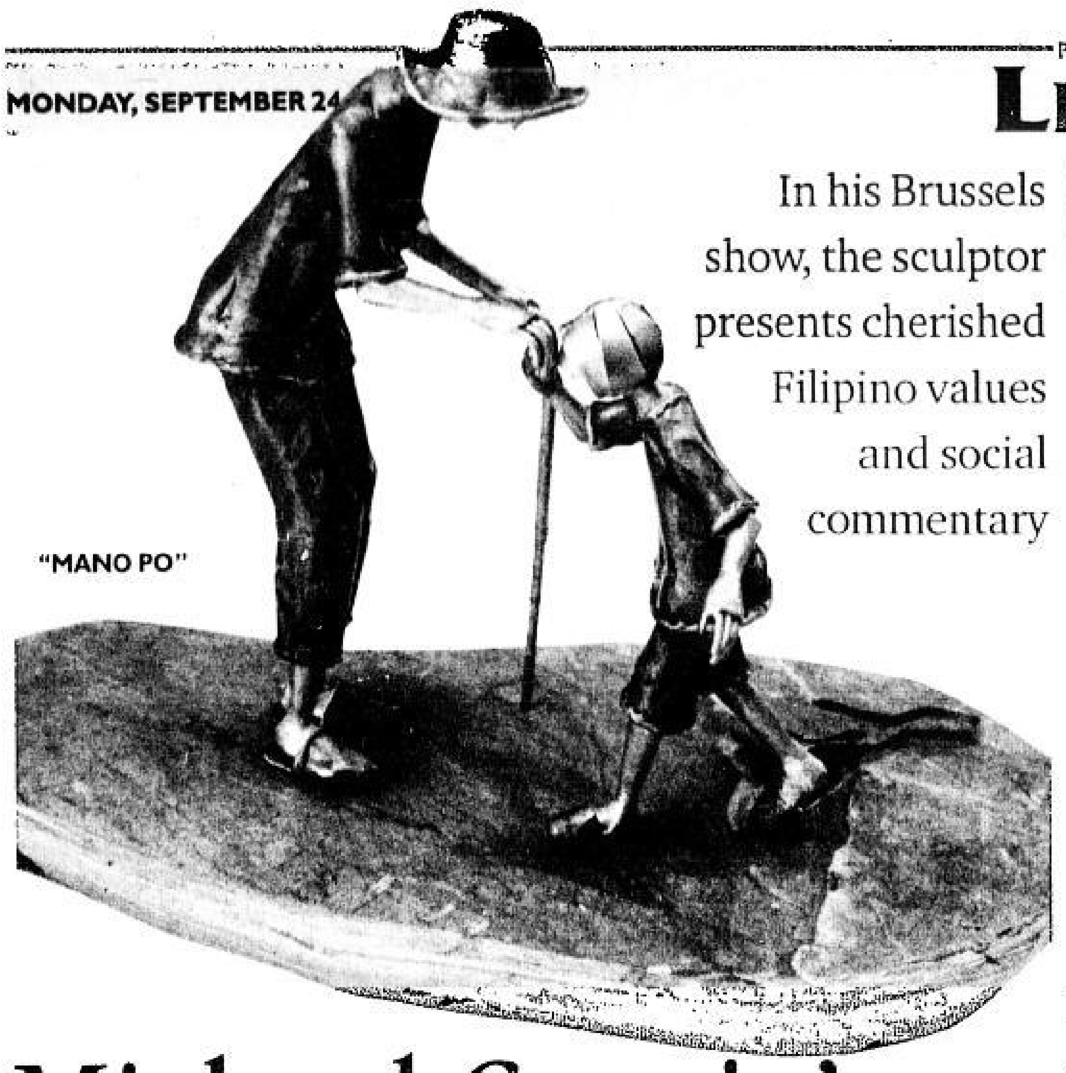
In all her other endeavors, however, Onib was fully supportive of his daughter. He would wait for his daughter during ballet sessions where he himself would be exposed to demonstrations that showed the intricacies of *plies* and *releves*, *pas de deux* and *arabesques*.

These unexpected demo-lectures on ballet gave Onib a basic backgrounder on the various ballet positions, which he would depict on canvas but, of course, with his trademark distortions—without the fey and dreamy quality of Degas's impressionistic paintings.

The artistic bent Bambi inherited from her father was recently illustrated in her first solo photo exhibit at Ayala Museum.

While her father expressed his world view by means of forms, colors and figures on canvas, Bambi has chosen to project her perspective through the silver lens. Her photographs illustrate her feel for composition and her technical skills in what is considered the art form of the digital era.

Viewers were one in saying that her photographs were perceptive images of the real world, giving insights into the beauty all around us, escaping our notice because of our jaded outlook.



"MANO PO"

In his Brussels show, the sculptor presents cherished Filipino values and social commentary

Michael Cacnio's 'everyJuan'

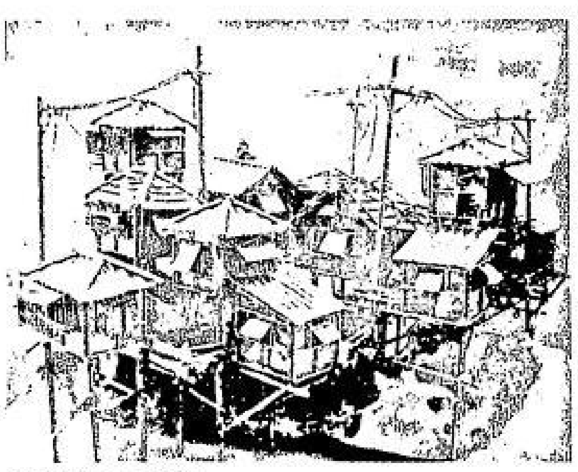
By Jessica Jalandoni-Robillos
Contributor

FOR 15 YEARS NOW, TOYM (THE Outstanding Young Men) Philippines 2006 awardee Michael Cacnio has been steadily depicting the good and the wholesome: Filipino values of strong family ties; respect for elders; hardy labor and simple pleasures.

Cacnio graduated from University of the Philippines in 1991 with a degree in Fine Arts. He experimented with brass at a time when it was not a popular medium.

Upon deciding he was comfortable with his cut-and-solder method as opposed to molding, he began presenting depictions of children playing traditional Filipino games such as *sungka, luksong baka* and *tirador*, inspired by his own childhood in Malabon; and his series of vendors, among them the *magtataho* and *sorbetero*.

He has also become known for poignant parent-and-child renditions—so-called "Kodak" moments captured in brass. Most popular are his kite-flyers, which are still in demand, with the bobbing brass lines also featured in his fishing pieces.



"KAPITBAHAY"

As he neared his 15th year in the art scene, Cacnio began to include less-than-sunny aspects of the Filipino's life and persona, a turn deemed natural by art critic Lito Zulueta:

"It seems only a matter of time for the young sculptor to turn to social criticism; his earlier works for which he has won acclaim are scenes of folksy idyll and bucolic romance. They basically betray the artist's romantic temperament: a pining for things either vanishing or gone, a betrayal of panic as change and debasement become inevitable.

"The romantic feeling, of course, hides an undercurrent of anger for the despoliation of nature; it's noble anger at the disappearance of noble savagery. So it is just a matter of time for Cacnio to turn his art into a mordant piece of social protest."

That Cacnio has graduated to a more socially aware phase in his art does not affect his rustic scenes. In the same way that these works have won critical acclaim and have been showcased in sold-out exhibits here, the United States, Canada and Singapore, the newest additions are just as well-received and have earned good reviews.

The social commentary actually complements his earlier works. The works from the two phases become a testament to the evolution of the artist without jarring changes.

His Giacometti-inspired elongated figures are constant; Filipiniana garb is still hinted at, if not totally evident; and always, even when fueled by protest, the works bear a distinct countenance which encourages enlightenment rather than stirrings of dissent.

After his sold-out exhibit at the Philippine Center in New York in July, Cacnio now presents "Philippine Perspectives," a body of works showcased at the EC Berlaymont Building in Brussels, Belgium, as part of the 30th anniversary celebration of Asean-EU relations.

Comprehensive

Cacnio's current collection is very much similar to that which he presented in New York. It is also a comprehensive range of sculptures that spotlights his skill at rendering angst-free artworks-with-a-conscience.

The collection may be considered complete in that it showcases his well-loved traditional pieces and other subjects that may elicit nostalgia from the Filipino community abroad.

Cacnio renders with amusing detail a jumble of shanties; a cockfight; a beer bottle-clutching man almost sprawled on a bench; a father of three on the phone, presumably taking an overseas call from his OFW wife, who has sent home the newly opened *balikbayan* box.

In all of these scenes, Cacnio subtly tackles issues of poverty, gambling and vices, and maybe even the brain drain.

And yet, rather than perceive the images with gloom, it is almost certain that audiences will be won over more by the memories of home. This way, Cacnio is able to summarize a Filipino mind-set: that of resilience, making do and even being merry despite the most grueling of circumstances, and coping by seeing the lighter aspect of things.

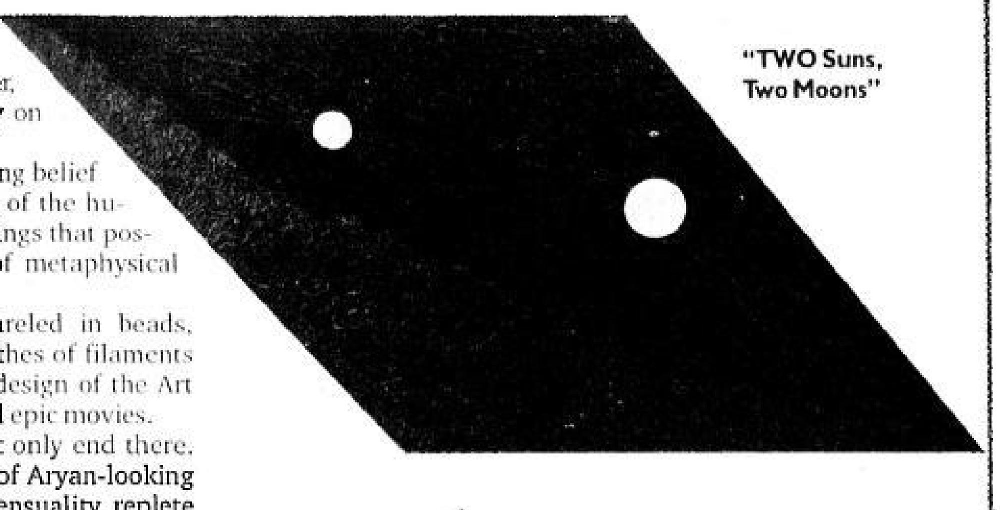
The artist's wishes are simple enough: "I pray to be identified as the Filipino sculptor who has contributed to the preservation of the Philippine heritage, who is respected by fellow artists, and who believes it is through God's Providence that I am able to create my own sculptures."

The artist focuses more on the bright side however biting his social commentary. It is commentary that invites both sympathy and empathy, and though the psychosocial bearings may breach borders and race, it is especially understood by his fellow Filipinos because it seems Cacnio has made a way for "everyJuan" to be somehow synonymous to "everyone."

Send comments to majorday@gmail.com

AMBASSADOR Cristina G. Ortega and the director general for external relations of the European Commission (EC), Eneko Landaburu (second from left), are flanked by Michael Cacnio and Ma. Theresa Cacnio during the vernissage-cocktail reception for the artist at Berlaymont building of the EC on Sept. 18.

'Future Satraps' in Hiraya



"TWO Suns, Two Moons"

NISAEL AGAG'S EXHIBITION "Future Satraps," a holographic teaser, opened in Hiraya Gallery on Sept. 20.

The artist holds a strong belief in a universal evolution of the human race into higher beings that possess the altered state of metaphysical powers.

His figures are appareled in beads, bangles, horns and swathes of filaments similar to the costume design of the Art Deco icons in Hollywood epic movies.

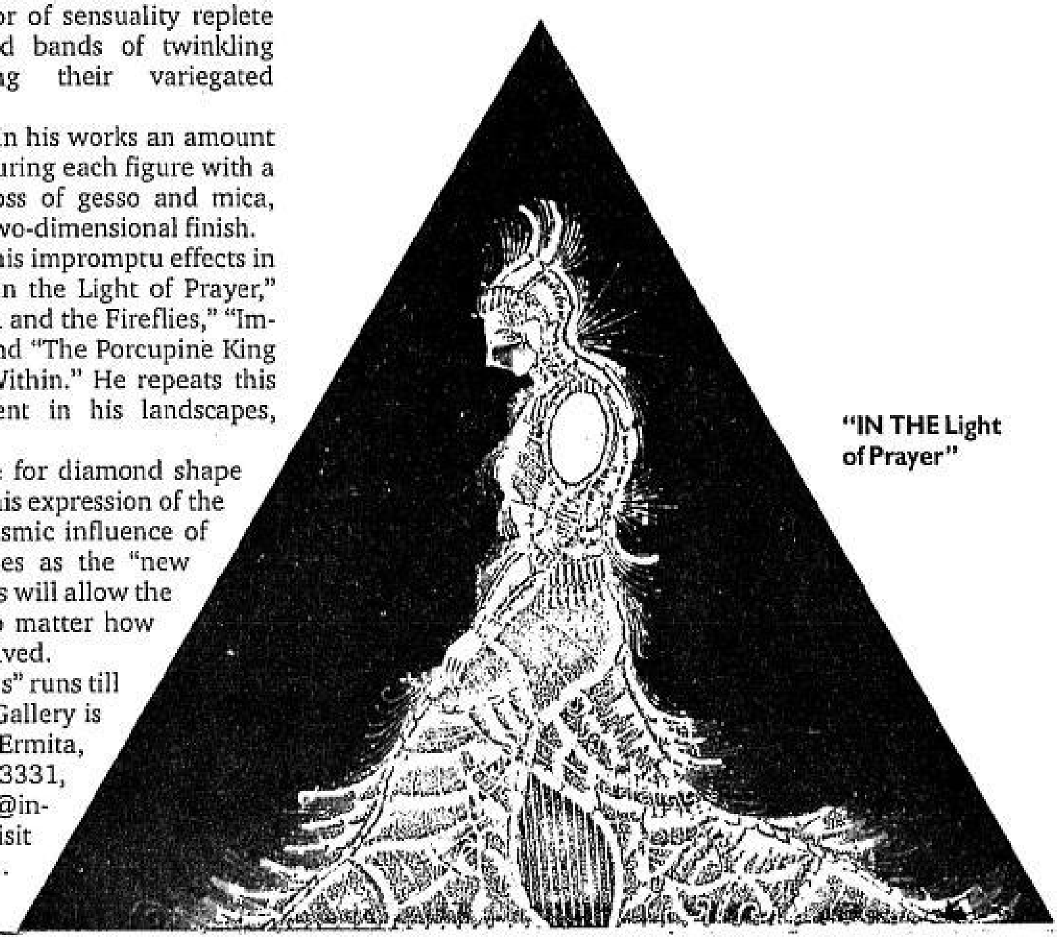
The allusion does not only end there. Agag renders his array of Aryan-looking idols the splendor of sensuality replete with plumes and bands of twinkling lights displaying their variegated prowess.

Agag displays in his works an amount of patience, nurturing each figure with a slow, daily emboss of gesso and mica, which gives it a two-dimensional finish.

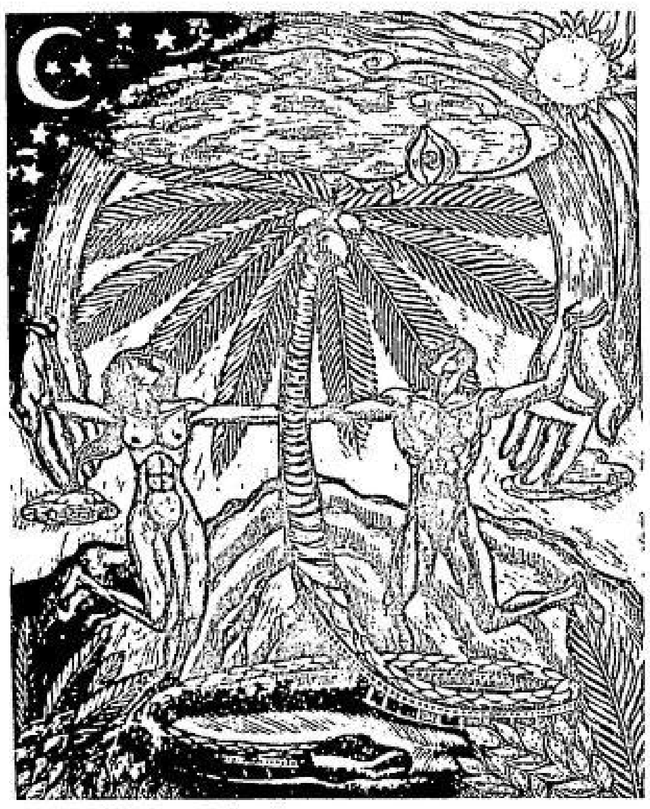
He has laced this impromptu effects in works such as "In the Light of Prayer," "Diamond Queen and the Fireflies," "Immortal Genes" and "The Porcupine King and the Space Within." He repeats this surprising element in his landscapes, too.

His preference for diamond shape and squares are his expression of the universal and cosmic influence of what he describes as the "new man." The shapes will allow the same synergy no matter how the frame is revolved.

"Future Satraps" runs till Oct. 10. Hiraya Gallery is at 530 UN Ave., Ermita, Manila. Call 5233331, e-mail hiraya@info.com.ph or visit www.hiraya.com.



"IN THE Light of Prayer"



"ANG PUNO ng Buhay"

Doloricon prints tackle Pinoy folk mythology

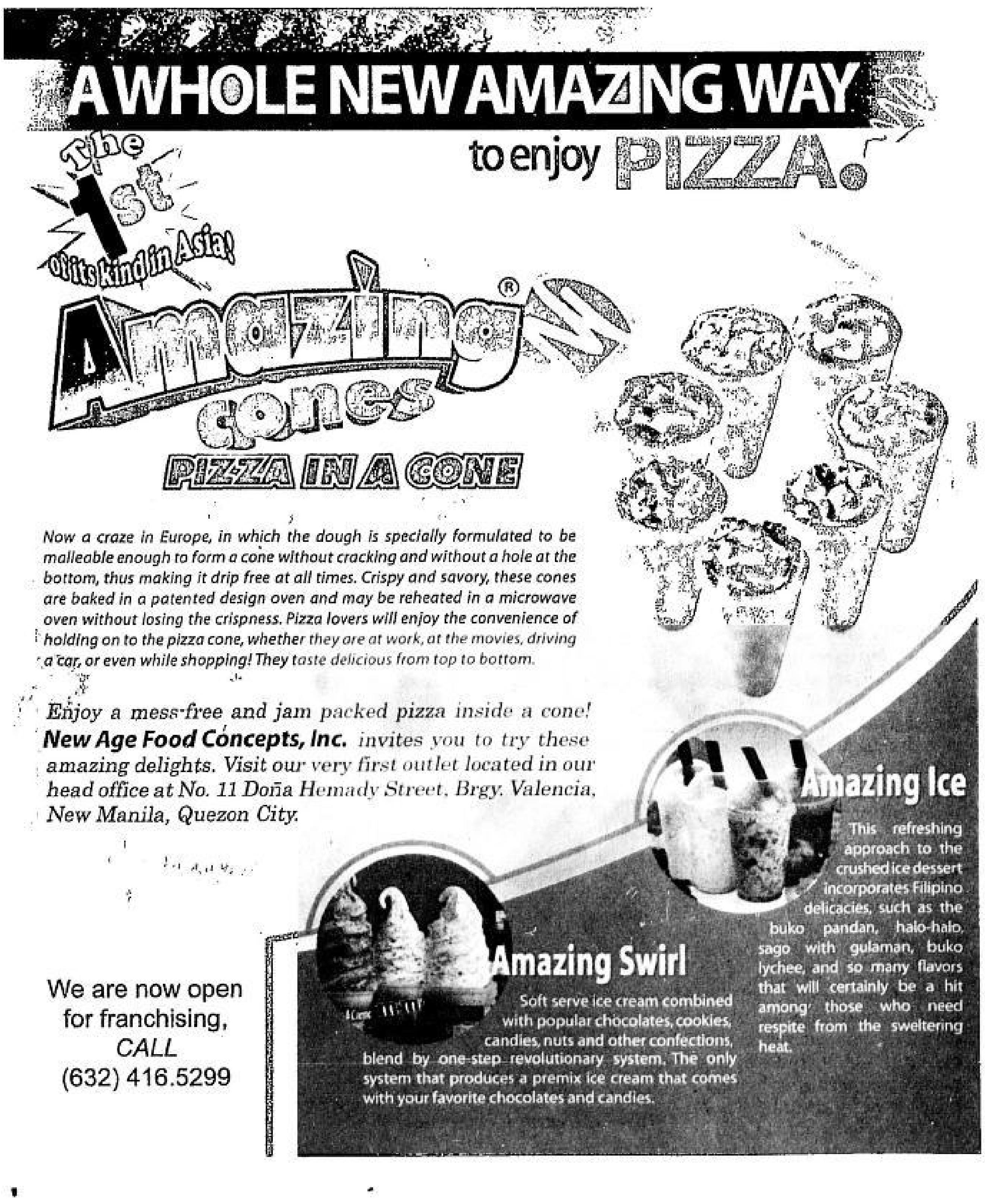
NEIL DOLORICON WILL HOLD A SOLO PRINT exhibit, "Alamat at Mito" (Myths and Legends), in the Philippine Center, New York, Sept. 24-Oct. 5.

The exhibit presents the Philippines in myths and legends as interpreted in rubbercut prints.

Among the regional myths are "Ang Diwata sa Batis" (The Fairy on the Stream) of Bicol region and "Ang Alamat ng Kidlat at Kulog" (The Legend of Lightning and Thunder) from Northern Luzon. A good number of the narratives were compiled by the friar-missionary scholars during Spain's 300-year rule and are still passed by word of mouth.

Local belief in the Divine Providence as translated in folk religion is depicted in "Ang Puno ng Buhay" (The Tree of Life).

"Ang Alamat ni Bernardo Carpio" (The Legend of Bernardo Carpio) is a Filipino folk icon, a man of superhuman strength similar to Hercules of Greek mythology. To Doloricon, he symbolizes the struggle of the people against foreign colonizers.



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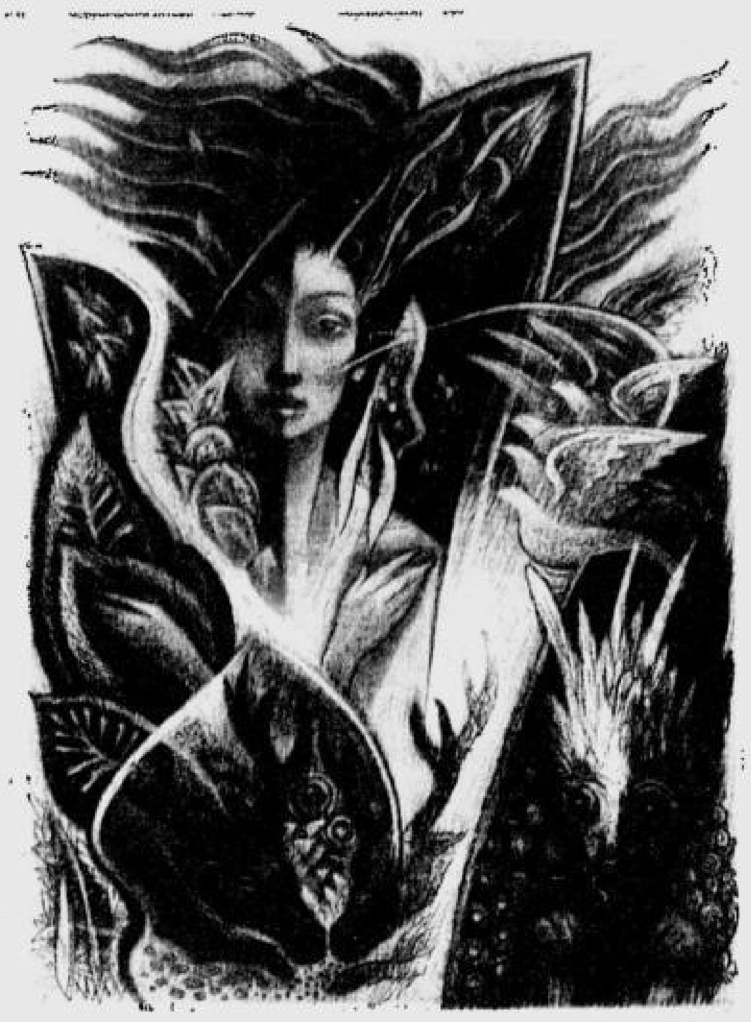
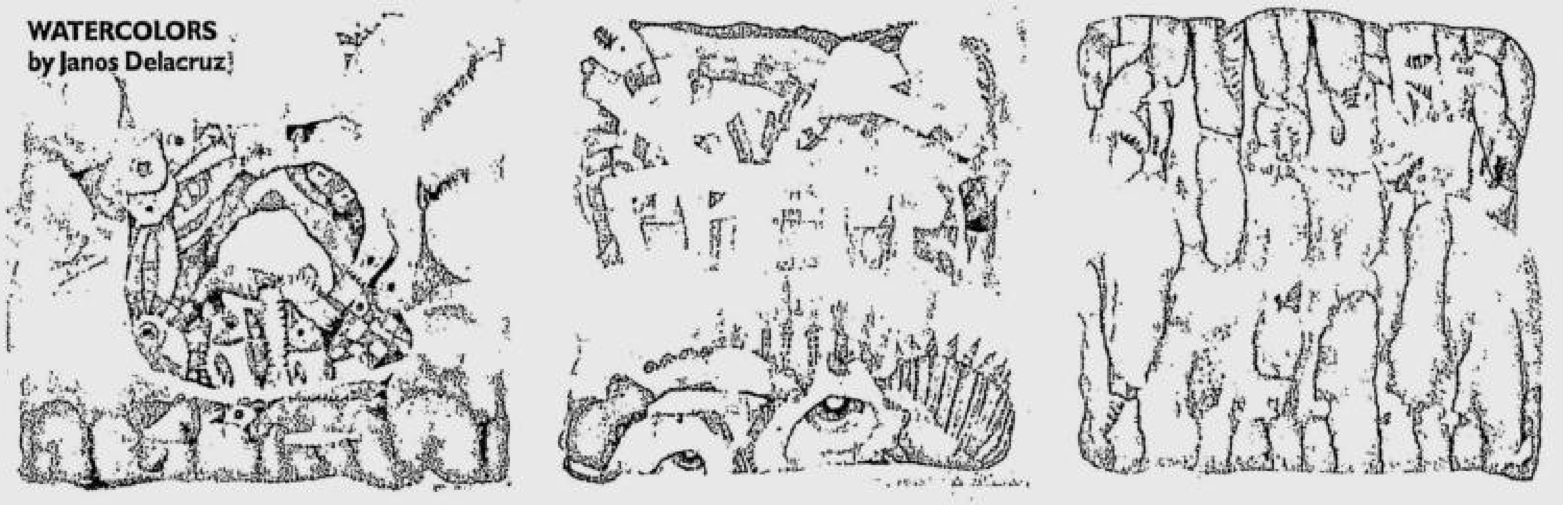
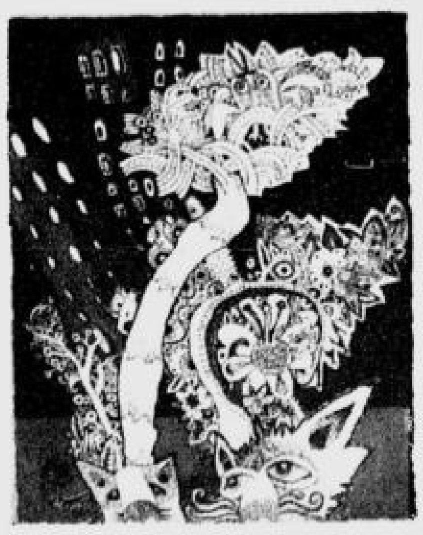


FROM Fil Delacruz's "Diwata" series of mezzotint prints; (right) an intaglio print by Janos Delacruz

WATERCOLORS by Janos Delacruz



Fil and Janos Delacruz in joint exhibit



FATHER AND SON FIL AND JANOS Delacruz dialogue through their artworks in the exhibition "ryt;mo sa 2b;g," featuring watercolor paintings and fine prints, which opens today at 3 p.m. in Sining Makiling Art Gallery, University of the Philippines Los Baños.

While the two capitalize on the fluidity of the watercolor technique, what they achieve is a somewhat surrealist atmosphere in their works.

This is part of the series of art exhibitions of Filipino artists presented by the UPLB Committee on Culture and the Arts.

The show runs until Oct. 26.

E-mail bahaysining@yahoo.com.

FATHER and son

The (he)art of the matter

Lamarroza exhibit to help raise funds for children's scholarships

By Johnathan Libarios Rondina
Contributor

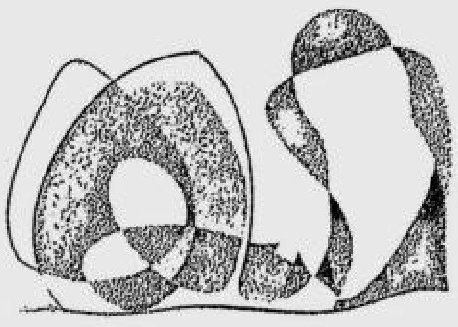
AT LEAST ONCE EVERY MONTH, Lewis Edwards makes the rounds of Manila's restaurants and other business establishments to collect tin cans filled with loose change.

Lewis, an American businessman who has lived in the Philippines for the last 30 years, is chair of A Better Chance (ABC) Foundation, a nonstock, nonprofit organization that provides scholarships to indigent Filipino children. Those cans he collects yield about P40,000 in coins monthly, an amount that goes a long way in supporting the foundation's over 1,000 scholars.

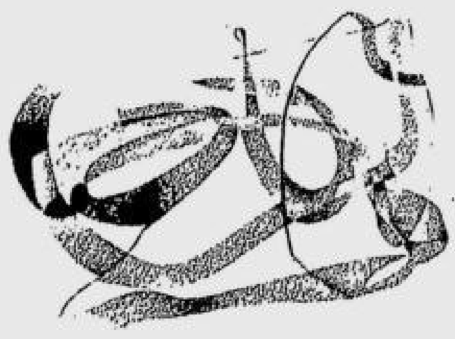
"There's one restaurant in Makati," Lewis shares, "where every month the 10 waiters split the money they get from their tip box in parts; the 11th share they donate to the kids." He adds: "It's amazing how even those who don't have much are willing to part with their hard-earned money to support a worthy cause, and it's such an inspiration to see them do it with such joy."

One could say ABC's scholars are being raised on the kindness of strangers. Thus, Lewis advises the scholars to "pay it forward" by helping others when they are able to.

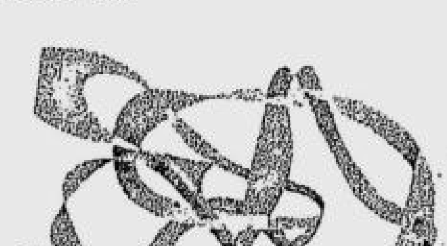
This year, the foundation marked a milestone by graduating its first batch of five-year night high-school students. Some of these students are now enrolled in college, taking up courses in education, nursing and others.



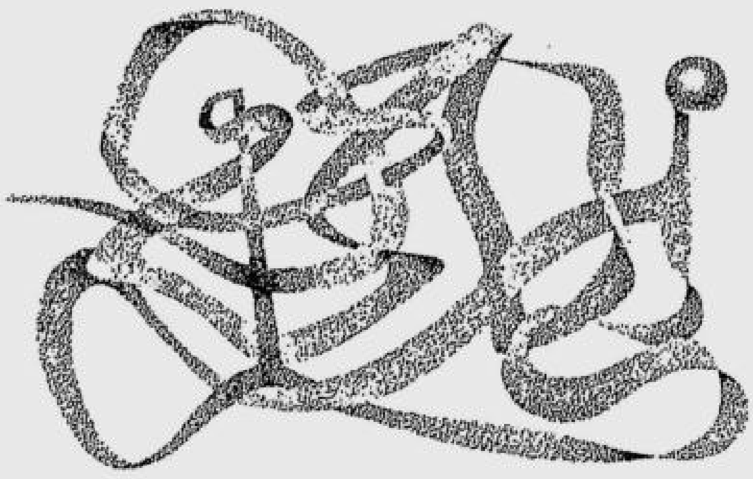
"KROKIS" 2.5



"KROKIS" 2.4



"KROKIS" 2.2



"KROKIS" 2.3

Lewis hopes these soon-to-be teachers and nurses will someday share the values of generosity, charity and kindness to the people they will serve.

For the most part, however, ABC's initiatives are supported by friends and long-time corporate sponsors like Bosch that adopt one or two classes. With more classes to support every school year, the foundation has a growing need to expand its circle of friends and donors and to find new and creative ways of raising money for scholarships.

Art for a cause

This week, ABC Foundation teams up with e Galerie (tel. no. 9153840) for an art benefit titled "Krokis 2: The Art of Giving," featuring recent works in pen and ink by Prudencio "Amor" Lamarroza.

The project is the brainchild of Jon Sy, the gallery's proprietor and a long-time donor to the foundation. Sy had acquired Lamarroza's over 100 drawings, a portion of which was exhibited in last month's "Krokis" exhibit also at the e Galerie.

This second serving of Lamarroza's rare pen-and-ink works features more subdued, minimalist abstractions. A number of them are ribbon-like renditions that echo Dutch artist Escher's "Bonds of Union," a fitting symbol to the many unseen yet ever-present bonds that connect people in the web of life.

"I am very happy and honored to be part of this project," says Lamarroza, who recently interacted with the students from Siena College of Taytay, Rizal, one of ABC's partner institutions.

The timid, soft-spoken artist was barraged by questions from the excited youngsters, all of which he answered with patience and humor.

For the students, the gallery visit was a first and the interaction a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet one of the country's most-respected artists.

ABC Foundation hopes that, with more support, it can provide these children with more of such learning experiences.

"Krokis 2: The Art of Giving," opens today through Oct. 7 in e Galerie at Serendra, across Market! Market! in Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. An artist's gala reception will be hosted by the gallery on Friday, Sept. 28.

For more information about A Better Chance Foundation, visit their website at www.abetterchancefoundation.org.ph, or call 6364153.

E-mail the author at nathrondina@gmail.com

RARE OPPORTUNITY. Night high-school students of Siena College in Taytay, Rizal, meet the artist.

The flower of his obsession

By Constantino C. Tejero

GREGORY RAYMOND Halili's family emigrated to the United States when he was a teenager. Now 32 and an established artist, he still retains a deep fascination with the folk culture and landscape of his birthplace.

Based in Philadelphia, he regularly visits the country at least once a year, and the intensity of that fascination he expresses in the obsessive art of the miniature. Manila had been graced by exhibits of his miniature portraits of the hardy Cordillera folk based on photographs of Masferre, and lunettes of Filipino women in *baro't saya* based on images from antique reliquaries.

In his latest series of miniatures, Halili is further pushing his skill and talent, in the process expanding the limits of his art. While in the previous series his dexterity had been tested in rendering myriad patterns and color tones on a thumb-size format, now he has taken upon himself a greater task by choosing as subject on the same format one of the most complex forms known to artists—the orchid.

We can say he has fulfilled this extra challenge in "Orchids," 20 pieces in watercolor on paper, recently in West Gallery at the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

Limning numerous orchid varieties in painstaking details, Halili compacts in these pieces a range of colors from red to violet, gold, orange, white, fuchsia, and a variety of patterns from "ribbons of ribs on the petals" to "dots and dashes surrounding the nucleus."

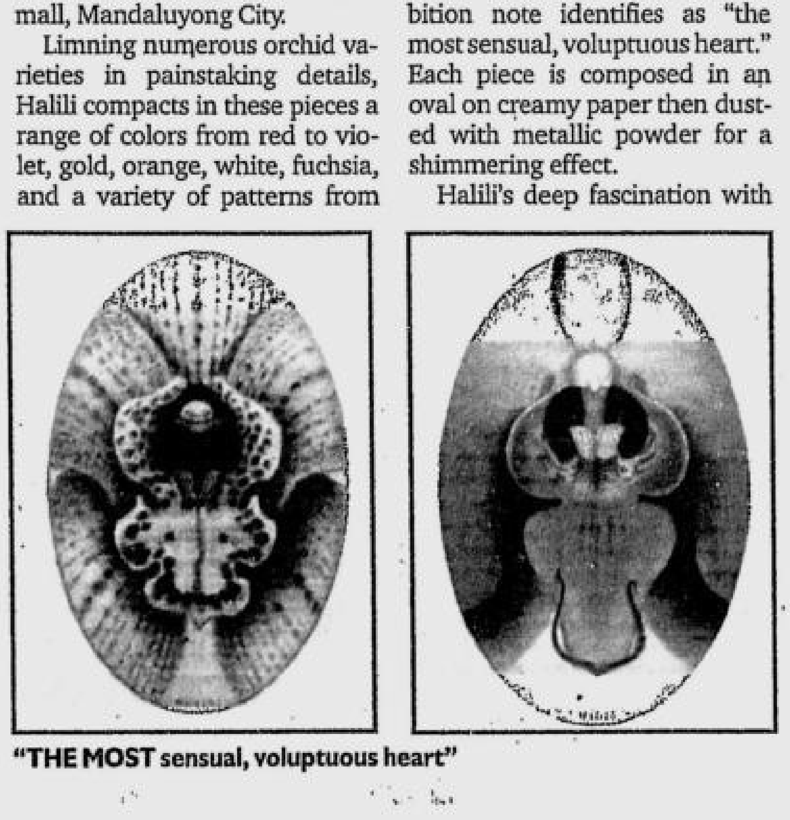
He never actually depicts the entire flower but focuses on its labial form, specifically the core of gold or fuchsia, what the exhibition note identifies as "the most sensual, voluptuous heart." Each piece is composed in an oval on creamy paper then dusted with metallic powder for a shimmering effect.

Halili's deep fascination with orchids is revealed by the exhibition note: "The orchid is the flower most closely associated with humans, particularly the female genitalia. In the artist's eye, the core is at times abstract, at times like an oyster with a pearl nestled in its folds, at other times rippling petals frame the flower's inner structure."

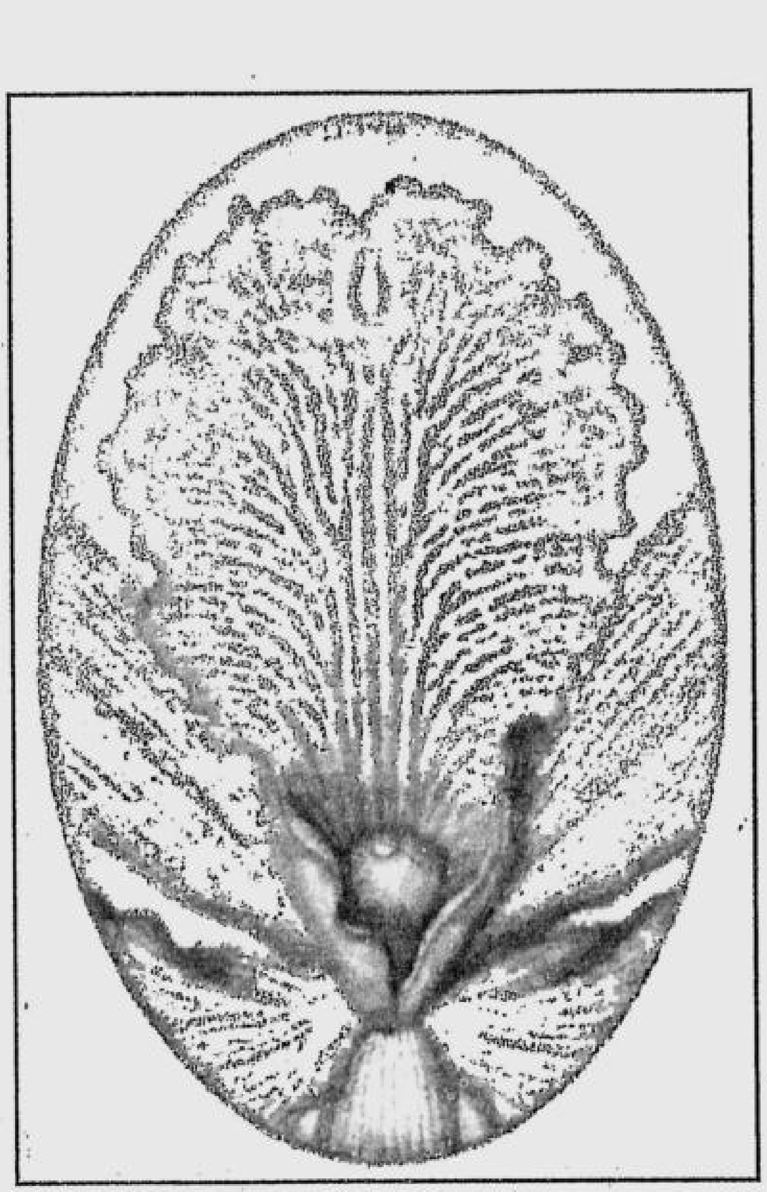
A Fine Arts graduate from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Halili has exhibited his works in New York, Philadelphia, Ohio, Arkansas, Florida, Wisconsin, Washington, DC. In the Philippines, aside from West Gallery, he has shown in the Jorge Vargas Museum of the University of the Philippines.

In this exhibit the artist is a child again lost in "the heat, the light, the perfume in the air, the lush green foliage and profusion of orchids... a tropical paradise so rich with visual texture and fabric—of butterfly jungles, vistas of clouds, silhouettes of palm trees in the night."

Quite a romantic notion. Especially when that child is now a man bewitched by a flower.



"THE MOST sensual, voluptuous heart"



"OVAL Orchid"

ENTERTAINMENT

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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Rustom, lost and found

Awards and a movie with brothers Robin and Rommel cap his second coming

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

WITH PRIDE, THIS YEAR'S Urian and Gawad Tanglaw Best Actor Rustom Padilla relates that his planned movie with brothers Robin and Rommel was cooked up over dinner—right after their much-hyped appearance on the GMA 7 chat show "Showbiz Central."

"I told them about my story idea and we kept laughing," Rustom tells INQUIRER Entertainment.

In a nutshell, the movie will touch on the same issues the Padilla clan faced after Rustom came out on "Pinoy Big Brother"—but with humor.

That would be the LVN classic "Malvarosa" crossed with the indie hit "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros."

"It's realistic, but the approach is comedy," Rustom clarifies. "It hits close to home, but it's also different."

Producer is sister Rema Ohno, but Rustom is still undecided about directing the film, which he hopes to start before the end of the year.

"It will be difficult to direct when you're also acting with Robin," he quips, laughing. "It's best to hire a director who can be neutral."

Obviously, all's well with the Padilla brothers.

A lot of ink was spilled on how Rustom's Urian win had mended his relationship with his family. Adding to the drama, last year's Urian Best Actor Robin presented the trophy to a teary Rustom that night.

Rustom acknowledges that his award-winning turn in "Zsazsa Zaturnnah Ze Moveeh" is a "blessing"—professionally and personally.

"When Robin won last year, there was still a lot of uncertainty in my life," he recalls. "That made my win even sweeter."

It's more than recognition; it's affirmation, he says.

To think he almost rejected "Zsazsa."

"After I got out of the PBB house, all the offers were screaming gay roles," he relates. "But I eventually accepted 'Zsazsa' because [my role] Ada is very human. *Buong-buo*, not stereotypical."

He considers "Zsazsa" as his "thesis"—culmination of the two-year certificate program in Film, TV and Digital Entertainment that he

RUSTOM/ F2

RUSTOM Padilla considers his Urian an "affirmation." ROMY HOMILLADA

Critics maul reality TV show featuring kids

LOS ANGELES—A "LORD OF THE Flies" reality TV show that sees children left to fend for themselves in a ghost town made its much-hyped US premiere on Wednesday—and was swiftly savaged by critics.

The groundbreaking program, "Kid Nation," chronicles the fortunes of a group of 40 unsupervised children as they attempt to build a functioning society without adults in an abandoned New Mexico town.

The series has been compared to William Golding's classic novel about a group of children who crash land on a desert island and their subsequent struggle to survive.

News of the program, which was broadcast in a prime-time slot by network giant CBS, sparked a firestorm of controversy and calls for it to be cancelled on legal and ethical grounds.

Unsurprisingly, the show's initial reviews late Wednesday were mercilessly withering, with an influential entertainment daily branding it a "crime against television."

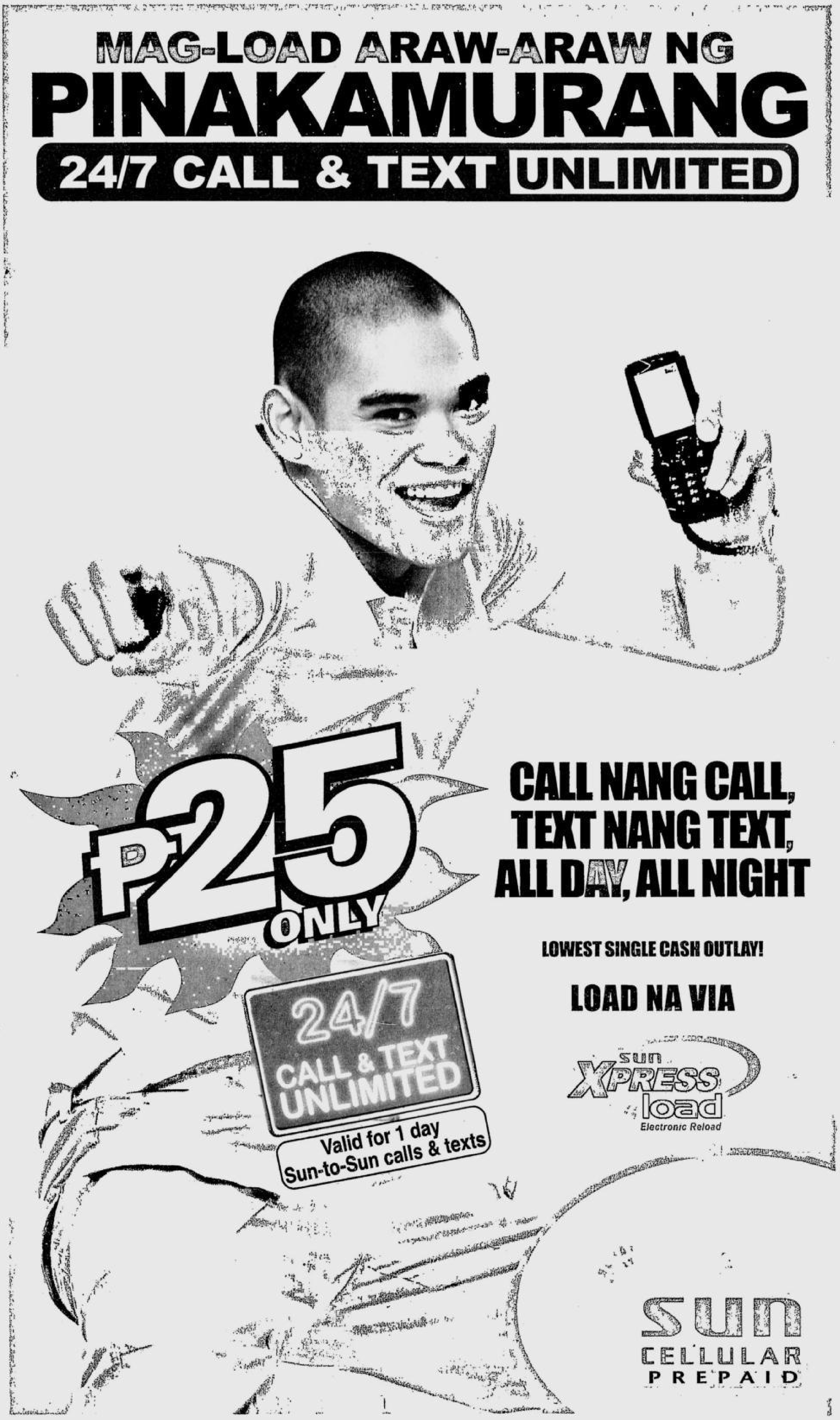
"Hopelessly derivative, shamelessly manipulative, and a bit of a mess," Variety opined, adding "creepy" for good measure.

"The manipulation here is so overt as to be almost laughable," the review said. "If this doesn't qualify as a crime against television nobody associated with it merits

CRITICS/ F2

RODEL ROTONI

SURRENDER TO CHANGE
"Change is inevitable and I have surrendered to it," actress and environment advocate Chin Chin Gutierrez told her audience during a recent "Women of Spirit" seminar. "Crisis is an experience of brokenness that allows us to remember that we were once whole," she said. *Page F4.*



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2 (DOLBY) CHUCK & LARRY
3 (DOLBY) BRATZ
4 (DOLBY) SHOOT 'EM UP

PREMIERE
(DOLBY) THE BRAVE ONE
ROGUE ASSASIN

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1 ROGUE ASSASIN
2 SHOOT THEM UP
3 CHUCK & LARRY
4 THE BRAVE ONE

starmall
EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3 CHUCK & LARRY
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) HOST
5 PLEASE CALL

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504288, 8433994

1 CHUCK & LARRY
2 ROGUE ASSASIN
3 SHOOT THEM UP
4 I KNOW WHO KILL ME

THEATRES
Pacific Mall Cabanatuan
Telephone No. (044) 600 5025

1 DAY WATCH
2 UNDERDOG
3 1408

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6771

1 1408
2 SINKING JAPAN
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS) ROGUE ASSASIN
2 (SDDS) SHOOT THEM UP
3 (DTS) BRATZ
4 GOLD (DTS) THE BRAVE ONE
5 GOLD (DOLBY) CHUCK & LARRY
6 GOLD (SDDS) UNDERDOG
7 GOLD (DOLBY) 1408
8 HOST
9 I KNOW WHO KILL ME
10 RUSH HOUR - 3

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niña, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY) THE BRAVE ONE
2 (DOLBY) SHOOT THEM UP
3 (DOLBY) CHUCK & LARRY
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

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Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

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2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 HOST
5 SHOOT THEM UP

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Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 THE BRAVE ONE
2 RISE
3 BLADE OF GLORY
4 HAIR SPRAY

Masagana CINEMA
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1 SHOOT THEM UP
2 ROGUE ASSASIN
3 CHUCK & LARRY

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1 DISTURBIA
2 DAY WATCH

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX) DAY WATCH
2 NANCY DREW
3 (DTS ES) DISTURBIA
4 LAST LEGION

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 THE INVASION
2 SKINWALKERS

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

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2 (DOLBY) CHUCK & LARRY
3 (DOLBY) BRATZ / THE BRAVE ONE
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1 DAY WATCH
2 (DTS) SKINWALKERS
3 (DOLBY) UNDERDOG
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

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2 (DOLBY) RESERVED
3 (DTS) RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 UNDERDOG
2 1408
3 (DOLBY) SKINWALKERS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 1408
2 SKINWALKERS
3 (DOLBY) UNDERDOG
4 (DTS) THE INVASION

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 SINKING JAPAN
2 UNDERDOG
3 (DOLBY) SKINWALKERS

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(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 UNDERDOG
2 1408

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

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2 THE INVASION

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) THE BRAVE ONE
2 TAGOS SA LAMAN
3 DRAZEN WOMAN
4 (DTS) RISE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) SKINWALKERS
2 HAMOG SA BUKANG LIWAYWAY
3 (DTS) DAY WATCH
4 SIGNOS
5 BLINDATING

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 CHOPSUEY
2 SKINWALKERS
3 FOSTER CHILD
4 1408

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2

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MOVIEWORLD

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GALLERIA
Ticket Price THX: P160 130 Indie Sine: 130 632-0116

1 THE BRAVE ONE • THX
1:50 4:35 7:20 10:00

2 ANG LALAKE SA PAROLA
12:40 2:30 4:20 6:10 8:00 9:50

3 indieSine: GULONG
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

4 SHOOT 'EM UP
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

5 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
12:30 2:40 4:50

7 BRATZ
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

8 ROGUE ASSASSIN
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

9 UNDERDOG
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

10 THE HOST
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

A FILM BY SOCKIE FERNANDEZ

GULONG is about friendship, love and life. The story is told from the point-of-view of Apao, a smart, kindhearted boy whose quest for an old bicycle reveals the stuff he is made of. With him on this adventure are his insan Momoy and his best friend Tom-Tom. The story begins with a question. How are our 3 friends going to spend their summer vacation? Tom-Tom suggests that they go to his uncle's fishpond, an hour bike ride from where they live. Apao and Momoy have a problem as they don't own a bike! There are no jeeps and it is too far to walk. Momoy finds an old bicycle but the owner, an old woman named Tita Maggie, will only give it to him if he pays her a hundred pesos. He agrees and promises to come back with the money the next day. This starts a series of events which affects Apao, his friends, his family and even his community. In the end, a discarded 40-year old bicycle connects the past to present and becomes a catalyst for healing old wounds and reviving a love affair that has long been left for dead

MTRCB Rating: G

watch this only at Robinsons Movieworld Galleria
September 22 to October 02

INDIE SINE

ERMITA
Ticket Price: P110 / P120

1 SHOOT 'EM UP
12:40 2:40 4:40 6:40 8:35 10:00

2 UNDERDOG 12:00 1:45 3:30
THE BRAVE ONE 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

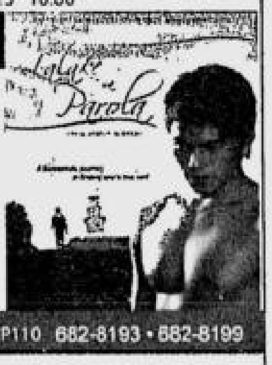
4 BRATZ
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

5 THE HOST
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:25 10:00

6 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:25 10:00

7 ROGUE ASSASSIN
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:25 10:00

exclusive screening



Robinsons Movieworld GALLERIA
September 19 to 25

"Ang Lalake sa Parola" offers a haunting yet insightful glimpse into one man's struggle to discover his true self in a world caught between fantasy and reality. In the midst of a conservative rural community, he must choose between being straight or coming out - and ultimately discovers that truth is indeed stranger than fiction.

MTRCB Rating: R18

METRO EAST
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1 BRATZ
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

3 SHOOT 'EM UP
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

4 ROGUE ASSASSIN
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

5 RUSH HOUR 3
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

6 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

7 UNDERDOG
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:40 9:00

8 THE BRAVE ONE
1:00 3:35 6:10 9:00

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1 SHOOT 'EM UP
2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
3 UNDERDOG
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN

PIONEER
Ticket Price: P100 / P110 687-6376

1 BRATZ
1:00 3:25 5:50 8:15

2 SHOOT 'EM UP
1:10 3:35 6:00 8:25

3 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
12:55 3:20 5:45 8:10

4 THE HOST
12:50 3:20 6:50 8:20

STA. ROSA
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (049) 837-0907

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 DAYWATCH
3 DON'T LOOK BACK
4 DISTURBIA

LIPA
Ticket Price: P90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 1408
2 SKINWALKERS
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 UNDERDOG

DASMARIÑAS
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (046) 416-4332

1 NANCY DREW
2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 PLANET TERROR

IMUS
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2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 UNDERDOG

ANGELES
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1 DAYWATCH
2 THE LAST LEGION
3 NANCY DREW
4 DISTURBIA

TARLAC

1 THE INVASION
2 A LOVE STORY
3 1408

STARMILLS
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (045) 875-1927

1 THE LAST LEGION
2 ROGUE ASSASSIN
3 NANCY DREW
4 DAYWATCH
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 DISTURBIA

BACOLOD
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1 SKINWALKERS
2 UNDERDOG
3 THE INVASION
4 THE KING of SCOTLAND
5 HAIRSPRAY
6 1408

ILOILO
Ticket Price: P70.50 / P80.50 (033) 336-8070

1 SKINWALKERS
2 1408
3 DISTURBIA
4 UNDERDOG
5 WAITRESS
6 THE LAST LEGION

Rustom, lost and found

From page F1

took up at the Univers
geles from 2004 to 20
"I applied everythin
ing. I immersed myselt
"Even though I was g
speak. So I hung out

POWER PLANT CINEMA

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THE BRAVE ONE R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	BRATZ G 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:10	SHOOT' EM UP R13 1:40,3:50,6:00, 8:10,10:20
UNDERDOG G 12:10,2:10,4:10, 6:10,8:10,10:10	ROUGE ASSASSIN R13 1:50,4:00,6:10, 8:20,10:30	I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY - R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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SHANG CINEPLEX

① UNDERDOG
MTRCB. GP 1:30, 3:30

② I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
MTRCB R-13
2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

③ BRATZ
MTRCB GP
1:50, 4:15, 6:40, 9:05

④ SHOOT 'EM UP
MTRCB R-13 12:40,
3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

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THE BRAVE ONE (R 13) 12:00
/ ROGUE ASSASSIN (R-13)
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R-13

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5:55, 8:15, 10:35
GP

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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 SHOOT EM UP
10:50, 1:05, 3:20
5:35, 7:50, 10:10
R-13

CINEMA 4 THE BRAVE ONE
11:00, 1:45, 4:30
7:15, 10:00
R-13

CINEMA 5 CHUCK & LARRY
10:45, 1:15, 3:45
6:15, 8:50
R-13

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September 29, 2007	Sugarfree	8:00 PM
October 08 & 09, 2007	"Alamat" Stageplay	[illegible]

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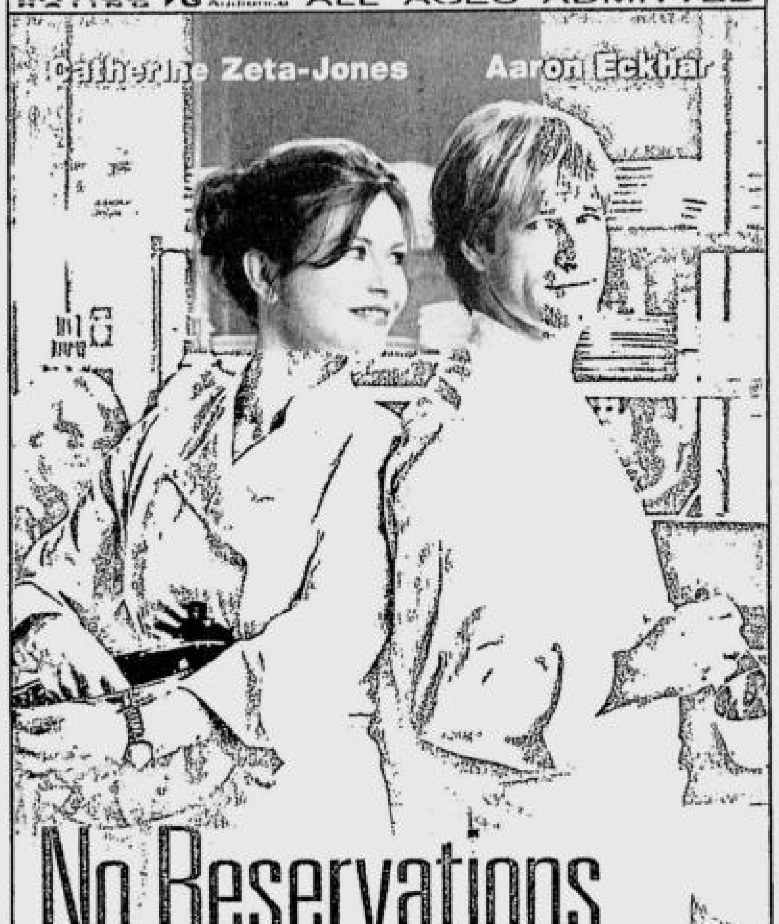

No Reservations

Life isn't always made to order.

CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH VILLAGE ROADSHOW PICTURES A SCOTT HICKS FILM CATHERINE ZETA-JONES AARON ECKHART "NO RESERVATIONS" ABIGAIL BRESLIN AND PATRICIA CLARKSON MUSIC BY PHILIP GLASS PRODUCED BY MARI JO WINKLER-IOFFREDA EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SUSAN CARTSONIS AND BRUCE BERMAN SCREENPLAY BY CAROL FUCHS PRODUCED BY KERRY HEYSEN SERGIO AGÜERO DIRECTED BY SCOTT HICKS

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ty of California in Los An-
6.
I had learned about act-
in the role." He points out:
y. I was never into sward-
ith my makeup artist and his *parlorista* friends."

He used the same technique as a gay basketball jock in "Happy Hearts." "I played ball every day."

To the extent that he was even linked with his coach in a *chismis* show. But Rustom didn't mind and focused on his goal: "I wanted to know how athletes talked and acted."

In this regard, he looks up to Hollywood actors Johnny Depp and Hilary Swank—both masters in "transforming" themselves. "When Hilary did 'Boys Don't Cry,' she lived as a man for six months. That's why she looked natural onscreen."

For his directorial debut, Rustom envisions a script that will dissect the same intense issues tackled in "Boys Don't Cry." "I'm into human relationships," he says. (In preparation, he signed up as assistant director in Chito Roño's "Dagaw.")

Needless to say, he's tapping into his own experiences—particularly, those two lonely years in the US, when he was still hiding in the closet.

"It was make or break," he looks back. "I felt lost. I told myself: If looking for myself was wrong, at least I was doing something right by going back to school. That gave me strength."

Critics maul…

From page F1

anything close to a Gold Star." National newspaper USA Today meanwhile hailed the program as a triumph of hype over substance.

"The show turned out to be far more tepid than its pre-show heat would have led you to believe," the paper noted on its website.

"Whatever dangers the kids on 'Nation' may have faced, the only risk posed to viewers … was death by boredom."

Government officials in New Mexico, where the show was filmed, were last month reported to be probing whether labor laws may have been violated following allegations that children had been required to work 14-hour days.

One parent filed a complaint after her daughter suffered burns to the face in a kitchen accident, while other children were reported to have accidentally drunk bleach.

Series creator Tom Forman has denied the children in the show were mistreated.

"These kids were in good hands and were under good care with procedures and safety structures that arguably rival or surpass any school or camp in the country," Forman said in a statement.

'Talent' fees

Children involved were paid $5,000 dollars each, according to reports.

Several parents interviewed have insisted they were unaware that there was the potential for their children to win $20,000 "gold stars" until after filming of the show was completed.

Critics have rounded on parents for signing waivers that stated the program "may expose the minor to conditions that may cause serious bodily injury, illness, or death, including drowning, falls from heights, encounters with wild or domestic animals, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and pregnancy." *AFP*

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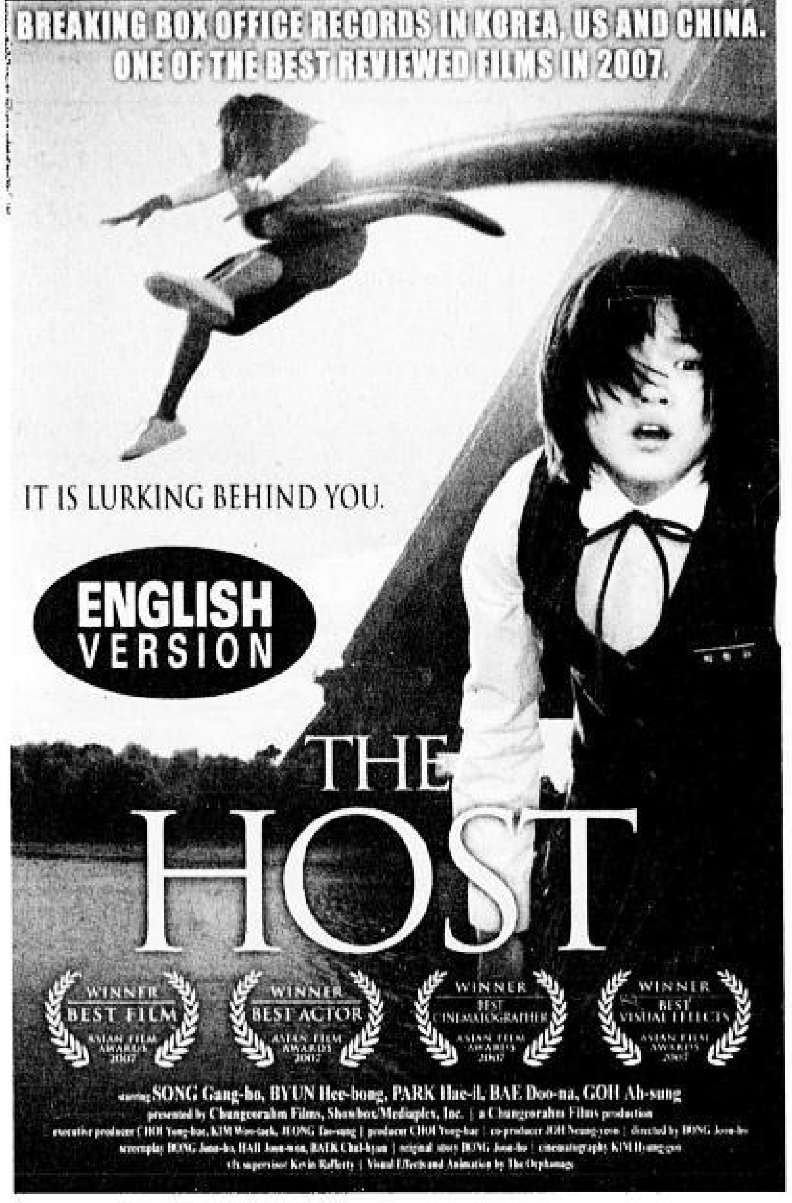
2	I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK AND LARRY 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:05 R-13	
3	BRATZ 3:05, 5:35 G	BRAVE ONE 8:05, 10:45 R-13
4	UNDERDOG 4:05, 6:05 G	WAR: ROGUE ASSASSIN 8:05, 10:40 R-13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screenplay BONG Joon-ho, HAH Joon-won, BAEK Chul-hyun | original story BONG Joon-ho | cinematography KIM Hyung-goo
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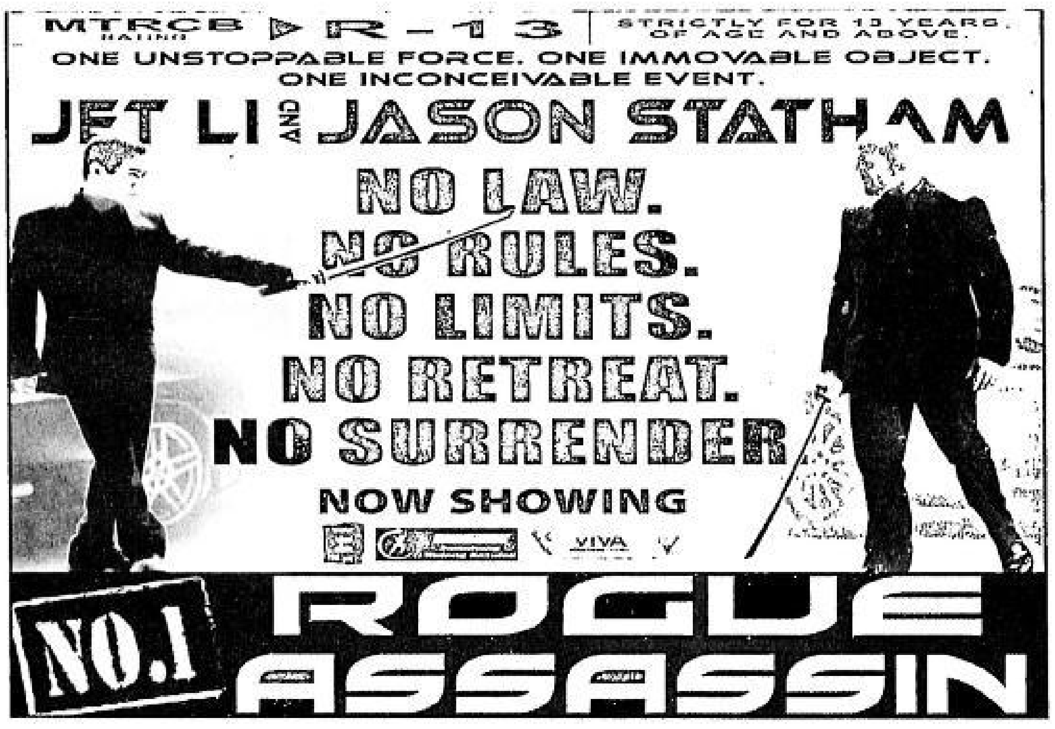
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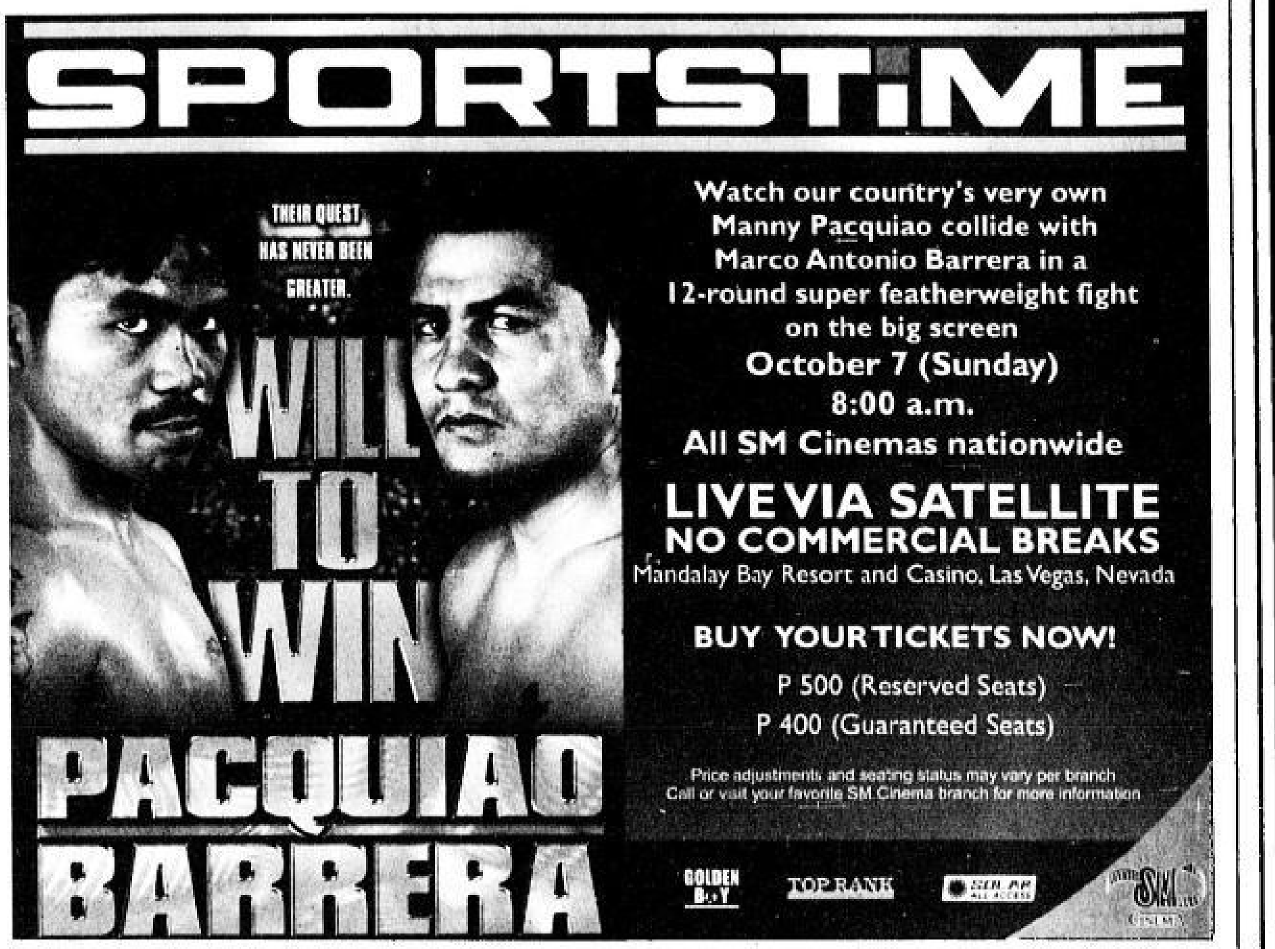
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Two win over a thousand faces

MODELS MARCO ODEJAR AND AIZA Marquez bested a thousand other hopefuls in Shopwise Hypermart's "Search for the One in a Million Face."

Marco, who was discovered by talent manager Douglas Quijano, is a regular in fashion spreads and runway shows.

Aiza was a mainstay in the defunct teen-oriented show "Thank God it's Sabado (TGIS)."

"This is the break I've been waiting for," said Marco, who saw his victory as a stepping-stone to bigger things. Standing 6'5" and with an engaging smile, he was the crowd favorite.

"I think it was my confidence that swayed the judges' vote in my favor," said the five-foot-tall Aiza, who admitted that she found the competition tough.

The two were pitted against 10 finalists—Aaron Agassi, Michael Agassi, Laurah Amin, Blenda Ariola, Karen de Dios, Morgan Gathier, Kevin Guersey, Dianne Marquez, Katz Saga and Michael Young.

Marco and Aiza went home with P500,000 each, a modeling contract from Shopwise and, best of all, instant popularity.

MARCO ODEJAR

AIZA MARQUEZ

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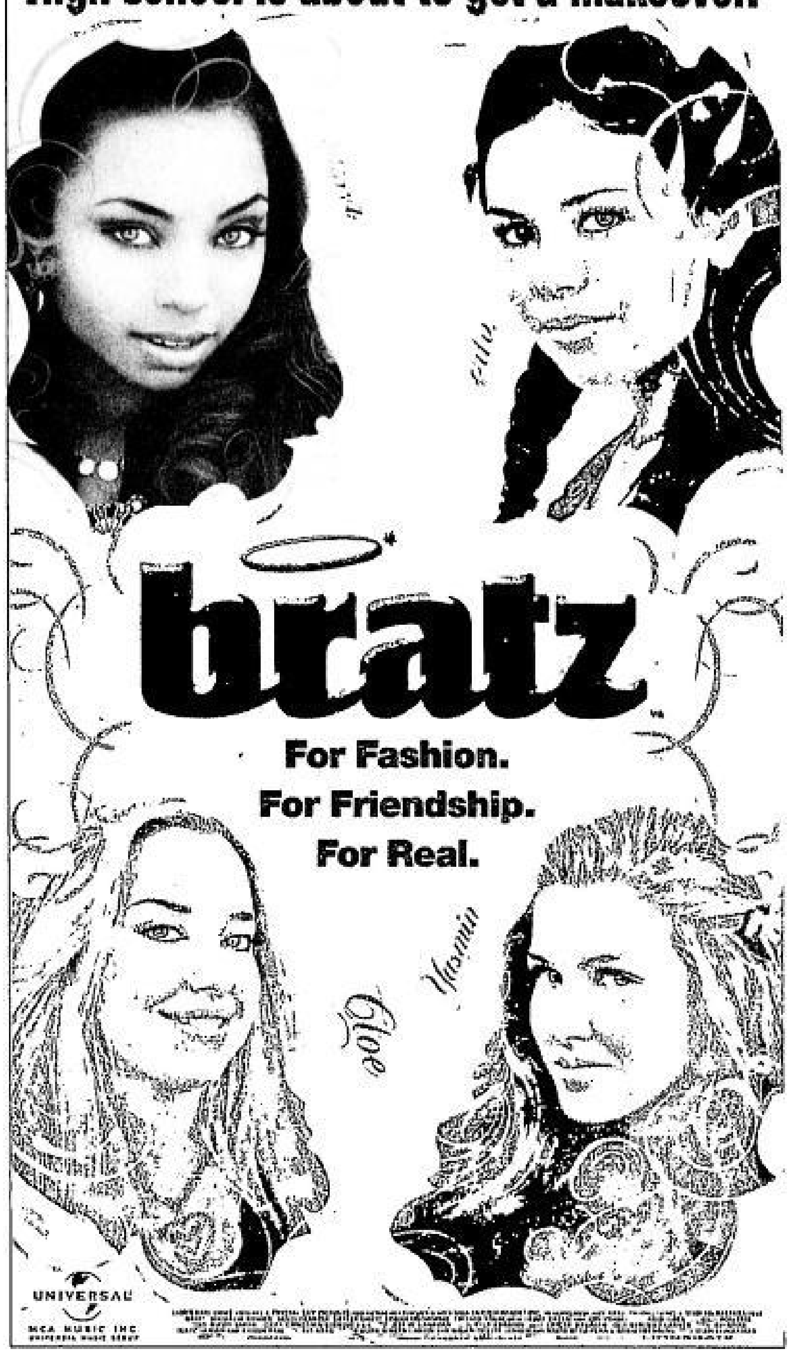
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Actress surrenders to change … and comes out a winner

By Fe Laconsay
Contributor

HAD SHE ALLOWED HERself to wallow in self-pity after losing her mother and material possessions, actress and environmentalist Chin Chin Gutierrez wouldn't have rebuilt her life as quickly as she did.

Instead, she decided to flow freely with the drama of life.

When Chin Chin spoke recently before a gathering of women at the 3rd edition of the Brahma Kumaris' Women of Spirit series, her face bore no trace of the fairly recent crisis she had gone through. She was perfectly serene and surprised her listeners with the depth of her insights, her sincerity and gentleness. The subject of her talk was "Stability in the Intellect of a Woman." The gathering was held at the BK center on T. Gener St., Quezon City.

Calmly, she explained how she weathered what could be the biggest storm in her life: "Crisis is an experience of brokenness that allows us to remember that we were once whole. You [must undertake the] process of being whole again. Change is inevitable; I have surrendered to it."

The Women of Spirit Series is a quarterly event that seeks to offer glimpses of outstanding women's lives and experiences.

AT THE CINEMAS

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	4	I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
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	2	SHOOT 'EM UP
	3 THX	THE BRAVE ONE GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	BRATZ / 1408
	5	UNDERDOG
	6	I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
	7	ROGUE ASSASIN
GREENBELT 1	1	SHOOT 'EM UP
	2	I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
GREENBELT 3	1 THX	SHOOT 'EM UP GUARANTEED SEATS
	2 THX	I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY GUARANTEED SEATS
	3	UNDERDOG GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	ROGUE ASSASIN GUARANTEED SEATS
	5	JOSHUA GUARANTEED SEATS
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX	I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
	2	SHOOT 'EM UP
	3	BRATZ
	4	THE BRAVE ONE
	5	ROGUE ASSASIN
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1	I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
	2	NANCY DREW
	3	ROGUE ASSASIN
	4	THE LAST LEGION
MARKET! MARKET!	1	ROGUE ASSASIN
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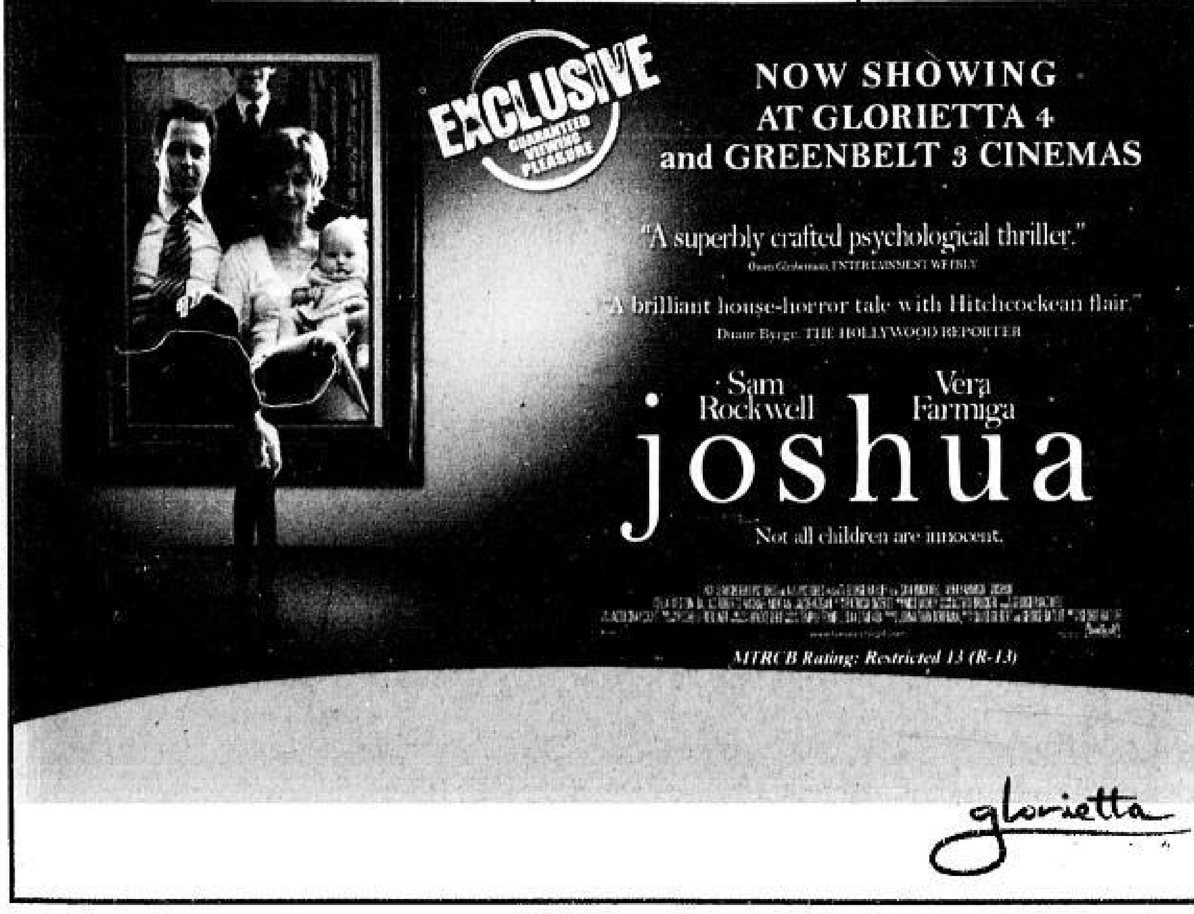

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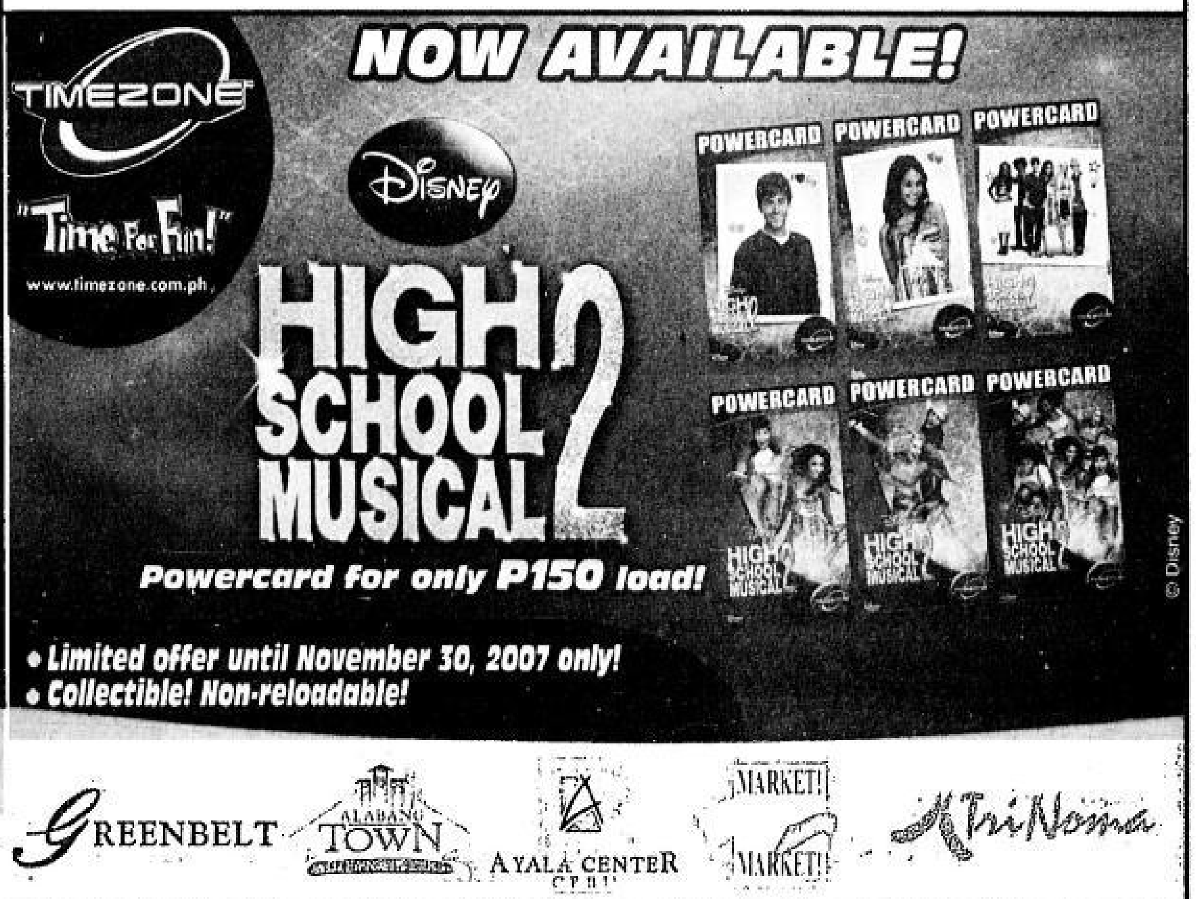

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Punks with pop appeal

By Pocholo Concepcion

REVIEW

FALL Out Boy (from left): Patrick Stump, Joe Trohman, Pete Wentz and Andy Hurley.

ON THE FIRST OF ITS TWO-night concert at the Araneta Coliseum, Fall Out Boy played a short but sensational set—sending some 10,000 fans swooning and singing along from start to finish.

This was an audience that would have looked out of place in a rock concert. There were college and high school kids all right, but we weren't prepared to see grade school children, too.

Surely they didn't recognize the band's opening gimmick—a canned recording of The Foundations' "Build Me Up, Buttercup" blaring on the house speakers—which, we assumed, was FOB's way of saying, "We've got loads of surprises coming your way!"

The first two numbers zipped by, catchy melodies so familiar, but whose titles we failed to remember.

One of the surprises came on: a note-for-note cover of Akon's "Don't Matter," which the crowd loved but was deliberately cut short.

Then the band went back to playing its originals, punk-driven but with pop appeal, because they talked about teenage rage, isolation, frustration and search for love in a pleasant tone.

"This one's about having a light in the dark," vocalist Patrick Stump said, before leading the band into "Hum Hallelujah." It was said to have been inspired by a Leonard Cohen song. And though it sounded spiritual, the lyrics went like this: "I sing the blues/And swallow them too…"

Bassist Pete Wentz, a fireball of energy who often twirled and brandished his guitar like a mad paratrooper, sounded offensive when he asked the audience: "Do you understand a word of what we're talking about?"

Failed to research

Either he failed to do his research—he would be playing in front of kids who could've been brown Americans—or he simply didn't want to be misunderstood. From the way he punctuated his spiels with *"muthafu__ers,"* it was obvious his adrenaline was on high mode.

The other members were a pure delight. Lead guitarist Joe Trohman, the band's founder, had this habit of sprinting across the stage, all the way up the drummer's platform, and then jumping off like he was skydiving.

Drummer Andy Hurley, a vegan and reportedly inspired by Metallica's Lars Ulrich, banged away like someone possessed by the spirits of great heavy metal percussionists.

On center stage, a geek-looking Stump kept close to the mike and poured his emotion like a guy trying to make up with his girlfriend after a nasty fight.

Another surprise: a faithful cover of the first few parts of Michael Jackson's "Thriller," replete with Eddie Van Halen guitar parts.

Surprising indeed, for FOB to try and turn on the crowd with sample covers that were hits before most of them were born (Stump and Trohman are 23; Hurley 27; and Wentz 28).

But that's the mark of great musicians, even if it's too early to say whether FOB would reach the rock 'n' roll hall of fame.

Meanwhile, to hear its own widely appreciated hits, such as the quirkily-titled "I'm Like A Lawyer with the Way I'm Always Trying To Get You Off (Me & You)" and "Thnks for th Mmrs," not to mention "This Ain't A Scene, It's An Arms Race," are a confirmation of the band's undeniable talent. (Interestingly, the first two aforementioned songs were produced on record by R&B superstar Babyface, due to perform also at the Big Dome on Oct. 13.)

Ironic, potent

These songs are full of irony—a songwriting approach proven effective in portraying life's tragicomic side, as well as capturing its audience's short-attention span.

But looking at how the Pinoy youth worshipped FOB like heroes, especially a couple of straight-looking kids who danced the pogo like crazed punks circa late 1970s, it would probably take a long while before the potency of this kind of music wears off.

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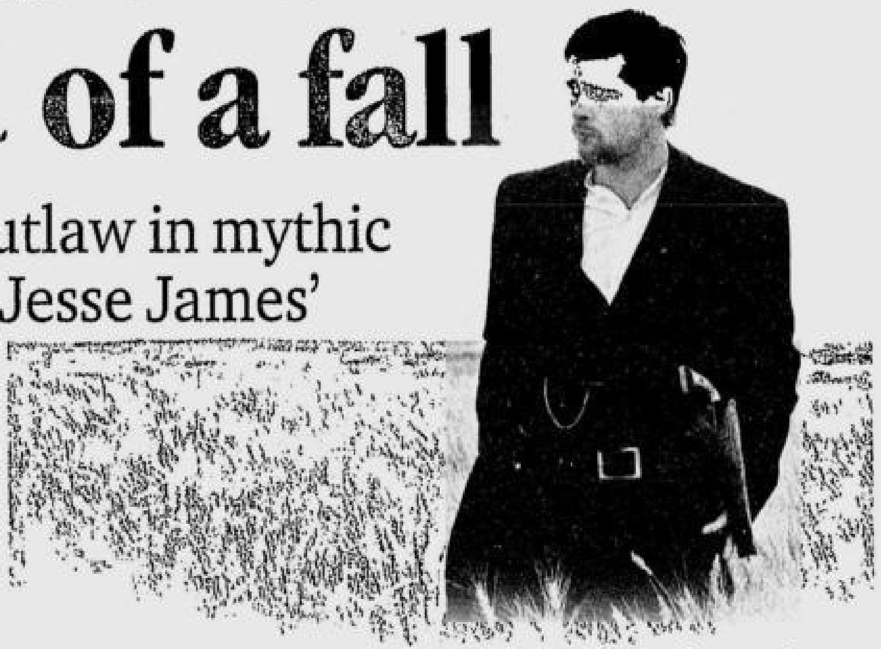
Legend of a fall

Brad Pitt turns outlaw in mythic 'Assassination of Jesse James'



TORONTO—WHILE news about Jesse James crawled its way across 19th century America—compared to today's lightning-fast Internet—the tone was uncannily comparable to today's celebrity coverage, Brad Pitt found in reading those old accounts.

"I will say, I was surprised to see how tabloid journalism was alive and well even then and operating in the same way, just sensationalizing a complete fabrication of untruths," said Brad Pitt, who stars as the legendary outlaw in "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford."

"There's just more of it today. There's more of it in quantity, but the execution's the same. In that day, when you only had a newspaper to get your information, that would have been the extent of it. But it doesn't seem to have changed at all," Pitt told The Associated Press at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Object of gossip

Pitt and partner Angelina Jolie have been the quarry of celebrity photographers and the object of incessant tabloid gossip since they hooked up amid the breakup of Pitt's marriage to Jennifer Aniston. A media vigil preceded the birth of their daughter in Namibia last year, and today, crowds swell everywhere they go.

In the late 1800s, James was able to move anonymously through America under a series of aliases, but his notoriety was unparalleled. His image as a Robin Hood-style bandit of the people—a myth he helped perpetuate himself—had made him a folk hero to the public and a demon to the railroads.

Dissecting the myth

Based on Ron Hansen's novel, "Assassination of Jesse James" dissects the James myth to present a charismatic man in the last year of his life, as his sense of security crumbles and he is overwhelmed by paranoia that associates are selling him out to the law.

Into James' inner circle comes young idolator Ford (Casey Affleck), who has grown up on romanticized stories of the outlaw's deeds. Ford later becomes an object of scorn for Pitt's increasingly unpredictable James, and eventually feels compelled to become James' executioner, coming to believe it's almost a civic duty.

"I don't know what led to his idea, the need to destroy the very thing that he worshipped, but that's certainly what's going on here. You have a demoralized boy who has this lust for the Jesse James celebrity, the Jesse James phenomenon," said Pitt, 43.

"Then at the point where his idol spurns him, it becomes that thing, needing to destroy the thing you love to become equal with it again."

At two hours, 40 minutes, "Assassination of Jesse James," which opens in US theaters this week, is a challenging tale. The film earned the Best Actor prize at the Venice Film Festival for Pitt, who could be in contention for a lead-actor Oscar this time.

Celebrity mystique

The celebrity mystique that surrounds Pitt meshed well with the mythic nature of James, said Andrew Dominik, director of "Assassination of Jesse James."

"It was the sort of part that you could cast a movie star in and it would make sense," Dominik said. "It wouldn't be miscasting Brad, who you never really feel like you know

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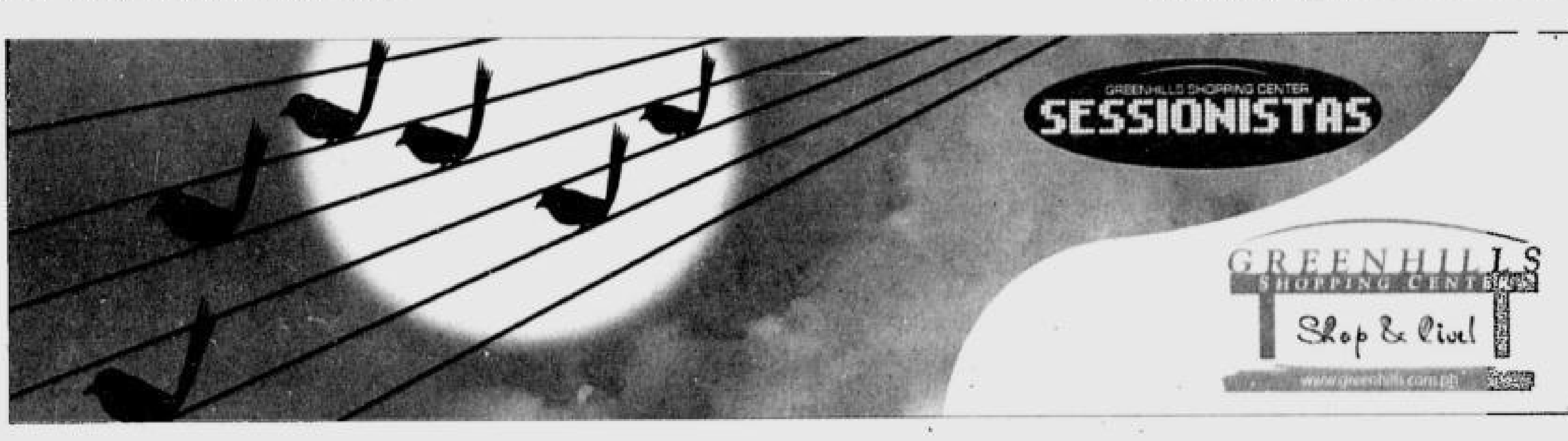

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LOADS OF PRIZES ARE AT STAKE!

New TV stars in shaky debuts

MANY NEW TV SHOWS ARE BEING launched these days, and some of them have been fielding promising young comers in lead roles. How have they been faring in their debut starrers on TV?

Marian Rivera, the new Mari Mar, is a visual delight, her "female beachcomber" screen persona looking appropriately tousled and elemental. Kudos to her show's image team for the effective packaging.

When Marian starts acting, however, the effect is less captivating. She comes off as too "mentored" and "workshopped" to be truly spontaneous in the original Mari Mar mold.

Perhaps it would be more productive for the show to encourage the young actress to get to the core of her character on her own, instead of patterning her portrayal to suit viewers' recollection of Thalia's breathless original. After all, Thalia didn't imitate anybody, so why should Marian?

It would also help if the series' twists and turns weren't so melodramatically contrived and resorted to for effect. Placed in bizarre situations, it's difficult for relatively new talents to keep their focus and come off with a measure of believability.

For his part, the show's male star, **Dingdong Dantes**, is also given a makeover for his role, with a more bronzed, toned look that becomes him. His character's situations are similarly contrived, however, so he can't really show off his acting chops.

(Off-cam Dingdong and his girlfriend, **Karylle**, appear to be putting up with a promotional campaign that intimates that there's something romantic going on

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

between Dingdong and Marian. But, the best the actor can manage is to sound "mysterious" about the whole deal, for fear of sending his real-life sweetheart into a blue funk. Ah, promotional campaigns! When will they go beyond knee-jerk shticks and tics? And, do viewers really fall for them these days?)

In "Mari Mar" and other *teleseryes*, sexy young starlets are being cast as seductive and bitchy *contravidas*. Alas, most of them are too raw and inept for those roles, which usually require actresses in their 20s, not in their teens, to do justice to them.

So, why are sexy young things being forced to essay them? Possibly because the soaps are aiming for a younger viewership. If so, the move is ill-advised, because many of these bitchy youngsters couldn't act their way out of a paper bag—much less out of a wee bikini!

In other shows, many child talents are being introduced and built up, but most of them are "generic" child performers—meaning, they play *pa*-cute and *porma* all the time, scream their lines with artificial energy or put-on emotion, and act much too maturely for their tender years.

The most popular among them is **Makisig Morales**, who started out as a singing champion, but has since gone dramatic or "fantastic" (he's appeared in some fantasy series).

Makisig is genuinely talented, but his *porma*, *siga* projection is stultifying. This really isn't the boy's fault, because he's just doing what his handlers and directors want. Can't they just let him act his age, so his performances can become naturally appealing and disarming?

The lead child actor in "Kokey" is a most welcome exception to the desultory rule, because he isn't *porma* at all, and acts like the kid he is. He has proven that you don't have go the loud *siga* route to become a child star on local TV.

Ironically, the most popular kiddie star on "Kokey" is—Kokey himself! Yes, the extraterrestrial dummy with a little person inside is the hottest new star on local television! Does that say something instructive or unnerving about the current local TV scene or *what*?

ROUNDUP

Online video

"NESCAFÉ 3in1 Flicks" invites film enthusiasts to create a 90-second film or a music video using the product's single sung by Parokya Ni Edgar on how Nescafé 3in1 enhances the *barkada* moments.

Hopeful entrants may log on to www.nescafe3in1.com.ph, which contains a specially-made video-editing suite where creating a short film or a music video is as easy as click-and-drag.

Winners in the basic categories will receive an 80G iPod Video while winners in the advanced categories will take home a Macbook.

Interested parties have until Oct. 25 to submit their entries.

ALICIA Silverstone

'Naked' Silverstone

HOUSTON—An animal rights group says Alicia Silverstone appears naked in a television ad promoting vegetarianism that was to debut Wednesday in Houston.

The 30-second ad was to air about two dozen times in Houston on Wednesday, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals said.

Silverstone is shown emerging from a swimming pool and talking about the benefits of being a vegetarian. She obscures the view of her body with her arms as she gets out of the pool, PETA said. *AP*

Owen's substitute

LOS ANGELES—Matthew McConaughey is taking Owen Wilson's role in the comedy film "Tropic Thunder."

Wilson dropped out of the DreamWorks movie after an apparent suicide attempt last month.

"Tropic Thunder" stars Ben Stiller, Jack Black, Robert Downey Jr., Nick Nolte, Bill Hader and Steve Coogan.

McConaughey, 37, has an uncredited cameo in the movie, his publicist, Nicole Perez, said Wednesday.

"Tropic Thunder" is about a group of actors who gather on a remote island to shoot a big-budget war movie and are forced to become the soldiers they are playing. *AP*

Film on trafficking

UNITED NATIONS—Actor Kevin Kline's new film on the epidemic trafficking of human beings, with girls forced into prostitution and children into slave labor, opened on Wednesday at the United Nations.

The film entitled "Trade," inspired by a three-year-old New York Times magazine article, tells the story of a 13-year-old Mexican girl and a young Polish woman kidnapped by traffickers and put up for sale in the United States. Kline plays a Texas policeman who with the girl's brother sets off on a dangerous rescue attempt.

"It tells a story with a human face and tries to make it very real without sensationalizing," Kline told a news conference before the premiere. *Reuters*

Stewart on trial

LOS ANGELES—Sean Stewart, the son of British singer Rod Stewart, has been ordered to stand trial on charges of throwing a brick at an automobile outside a Hollywood party in April.

A Los Angeles judge ruled late on Wednesday that there was sufficient evidence for the case to proceed and ordered Stewart, 27, a star and producer of cable TV reality show "Sons of Hollywood," to return to court for a hearing on Oct. 3. *Reuters*

Prince rocks London

LONDON—US pop star Prince had fashionistas dancing in the aisles at London Fashion Week on Wednesday when he staged a surprise performance at Matthew Williamson's catwalk show.

The singer, who is playing a series of concerts in London, at first appeared to be only a front row guest at Williamson's spring-summer 2008 collection.

But the usual fashion scene became a pop concert when a Prince track struck up and the first two models onto the catwalk—a pair of identical twins in purple dresses—started to dance.

Prince, wearing a black suit and hat, then began singing into a microphone from his seat before jumping up and performing on the runway flanked by his band. *Reuters*

Why Mega is 'afraid' to kiss John

'Some of the guys I had kissing scenes with in the past eventually became my real-life romantic partners—Gabby Concepcion, Richard Gomez, Robin Padilla ...'

SHE HAD had to lose weight for "Caregiver."
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

By Marinel R. Cruz

EVEN A VETERAN ACTRESS like Sharon Cuneta feels nervous about doing a kissing scene.

In her upcoming film "London Caregiver," the "Megastar" gets to lock lips with John Estrada as her husband, a male nurse.

"I'm afraid of this scene," Sharon told the movie press, albeit in jest, during the film's story conference last week. "The guys I had kissing scenes with in the past eventually became my real-life romantic partners—Gabby (Concepcion), Richard (Gomez) and Robin (Padilla). With the exception of Christopher de Leon, who had to wait for 13 years to kiss me in 'Madrasta,' and Aga (Muhlach), who got to kiss me only in the ending of 'Kung Ako Na Lang Sana.'"

Mega has been married to Sen. Kiko Pangilinan for 13 years. They have two daughters—Frankie, 6, and Miel, 3. Sharon has a daughter with Gabby, KC, now 21.

This is Sharon's first team-up with award-winning director Chito Roño. It also features child wonder Makisig Morales.

Most of the scenes in "Caregiver" will be shot in the British capital and Prague, said Roño. Filming in Manila began on Wednesday. The film crew is scheduled to fly to Europe in October.

Roño said he chose to shoot the film in an English-speaking country to do away with the language barrier, a major problem of overseas Filipino workers in Japan or Germany, for example. "Even so, Filipinos in Britain still have a hard time adjusting because of difference in culture," the director explained.

Sharon will work with three "major" English actors in this film, said Roño. *"Gusto kong makita ang isang Pinoy sa mundo ng mga puti,"* he added.

Roño also insisted that Sharon lose weight in order to "look perfect for the role."

Slowly but surely

"My metabolism now that I'm 41 isn't the same as when I was 28 or 30. But I'm losing weight slowly but surely," said Sharon. "I used to be on the Scarsdale diet. Some people would lose up to 20 lbs in two weeks with Scarsdale. That's what happened to me when I did my last two movies. But when I started eating like a normal person again, the rebound weight was horrible."

Sharon confessed that she felt upset when her supposed Star Cinema movie with Aga did not push through this year. "As a form of rebellion, I ate a lot. I think, for a while, that was what Aga did, too," she shared. "I'm happy that Aga looks really good in his latest movie. He worked so hard on his body."

Mega was last seen in Mark Meily's "Crying Ladies," which was shown in December 2003. She has done two films with Star Cinema—"Minsan Minahal Kita" (1999) and "Kung Ako Na Lang Sana" (2003).

Sharon is very excited for her daughter KC, now back in the country to pursue a career in show biz. The 21-year-old recently obtained a BA in International Corporate Communications from the American University in Paris. She just signed a contract with ABS-CBN and starred in the TV program, "KC from Paris to Pinas," which documented her stay in the European city.

"She'll be the biggest star ever," said the proud mom. "She's far more talented than either me or Gabby."

According to Sharon, her "poor daughter" was already a celebrity the moment she was conceived. "While it's a good thing, it has its downside," she said.

KC had to work hard "to make a name for herself, and get out of her mother's shadow," Sharon explained.

"I used to feel bad when, at the time she first joined theater, she almost never mentioned me in her interviews. Later on, I understood why she was doing it," Mega said.

Sharon added that, although there were no immediate plans for her and KC to do a movie or TV show together, she would welcome the chance to work with her daughter. "You all have to see her dance, listen to the songs that she writes, and read her articles," said Sharon. "She has a very good head on her shoulders."

Legend of a fall

From page G1

on-screen. He's always retained kind of an essential mystery."

Really good qualities

Dominik added: "Those were really good qualities for Jesse. They're both enigmatic and charismatic."

Cate Blanchett, his co-star in last year's acclaimed "Babel"—and with whom he is reuniting for next year's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button"—says of Pitt: "He's just so open. He's a great player. Brad loves a good idea and a good conversation, and I think that extends to acting, really. He's got a really good nose for what works."

Search for roles

Pitt is currently shooting the Coen brothers' dark comedy, "Burn After Reading," with George Clooney, his partner in crime in "Ocean's Eleven" and its two sequels.

While Pitt looks for roles that offer fresh dramatic possibilities, finding good work companions such as Clooney has become crucial in his job choices.

"As I get older, it's the company I keep," Pitt said.

With his production company Plan B, Pitt also is active as a producer whose credits include Jolie's recent drama "A Mighty Heart." (He also was a producer on "Assassination of Jesse James.")

Celebrity culture

Pitt jokes that the advantage of today's celebrity culture is that people are not carrying six-shooters around the way they did in James' day. Even so, as a new father, Pitt is mindful of the potential dangers that come with fame.

Along with their biological daughter, Pitt and Jolie have three children she adopted from Cambodia, Ethiopia and Vietnam.

"It's something that I want to be aware of and be cautious about, especially with the family, that everybody's protected," Pitt said. "I mean it's rare, but there are imbalanced people out there. I've had break-ins in the house ... I've had some of these abnormal incidents that can be frightening."

Just taking turns

When Pitt or Jolie is working, the other takes time off to tend the children, who travel with them wherever they are filming.

"We just take turns and make sure we keep the family together," Pitt said.

Pitt is quick to acknowledge reporters' questions about his and Jolie's plans for more children.

"We're not done. They say, any plans for a fifth? And I say, 'And a sixth, and a seventh, and an eighth, and a ninth.'"

"We also made a 9-foot-wide bed" (nearly 3 meters wide) that can fit him, Jolie and all four children, Pitt said. "Just big enough. One more and we'll have to go to 11 feet." *AP*

BRAD Pitt and Angelina Jolie at the US premiere of "Jesse James" last week. AFP

CHEER FACTOR

THE COMMITTEE THAT PICKED ADOLFO ALIX'S "DONSOL" AS ENTRY TO THE forthcoming Oscars was headed by National Artist for Film Eddie Romero, whose film "Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon" was the Philippines' first entry to that same competition.

FEEDBACK

Not funny

From Moli Gailan (molichild@hotmail.com), 844 Crittenden St, NE Washington D.C.:

Please tell Gretchen Barretto, Regine Velasquez and Kris Aquino to stop proclaiming to the whole world that it's ok to have an affair with someone who is taken. *Hindi na nakakatuwa 'yan!*

(Kris Aquino and James Yap are married. Ed.)

Incredible

From Ray Carbungco (reycarb@aol.com), 3350 La Jolla Village Drive, San Diego Ca.:

I can't believe that Ruffa Gutierrez is still around after that ugly incident at the MMFF years ago.

No disclosure

From Inocencio Angelito Abunan, 2324-B Syquia St., Sta. Ana, Manila:

I'd like to share a piece of my mind about the impending investigation of the Department of Trade and Industry on the latest "Wowowee" incident. The DTI should also investigate the rival game show. Particularly, they should find out how winners for the Globe-sponsored contest are drawn. Texters who only text once usually win, and not texters who text many times. Also, the show does not explain how winners are chosen for the load game.

(There is no ongoing or impending DTI probe of the incident. There is a Senate inquiry, though.—Ed.)

Nickname?

From CJ Maglunog (cjoyp_maglunog@yahoo.com), Bangkal, Makati:

Just want to correct the name of the MTRCB chair as it appeared in your page. Her name is Consoliza Laguardia, not Marissa Laguardia. Unless that's her nickname?

(Her full name is Ma. Consoliza Laguardia. She prefers to be called Marissa.— Ed.)

DID YOU KNOW...

ENTERTAINMENT highlights during the week of Sept. 23-29:

1955: Debbie Reynolds married singer Eddie Fisher.

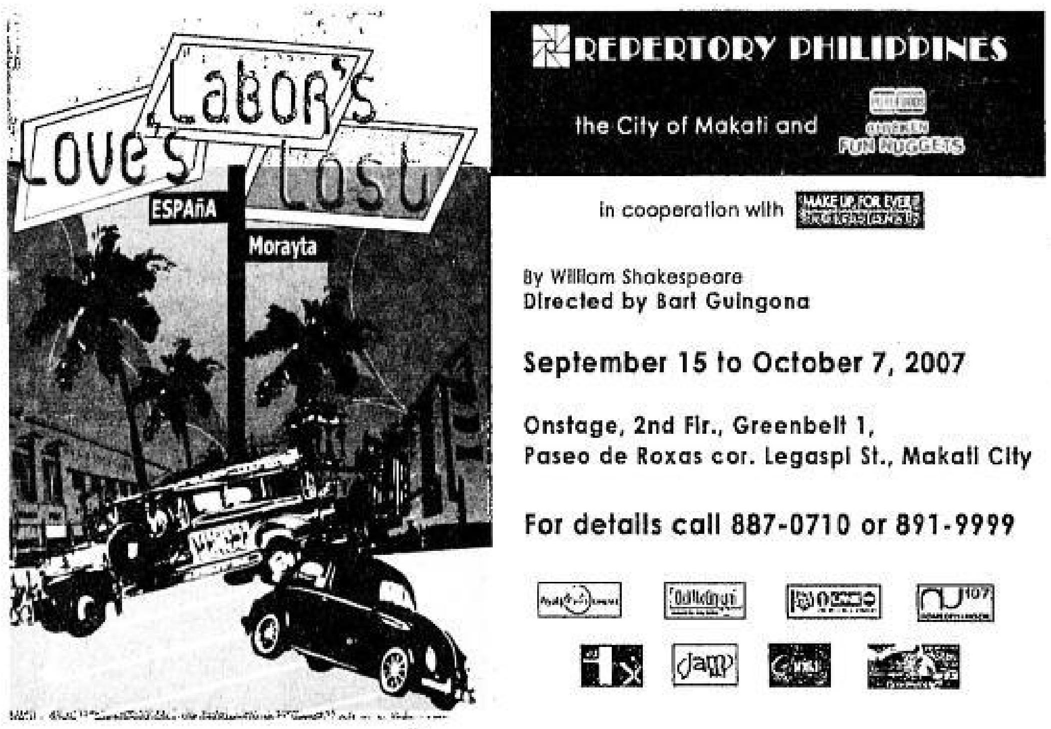
1977: "The Love Boat" premiered on ABC.

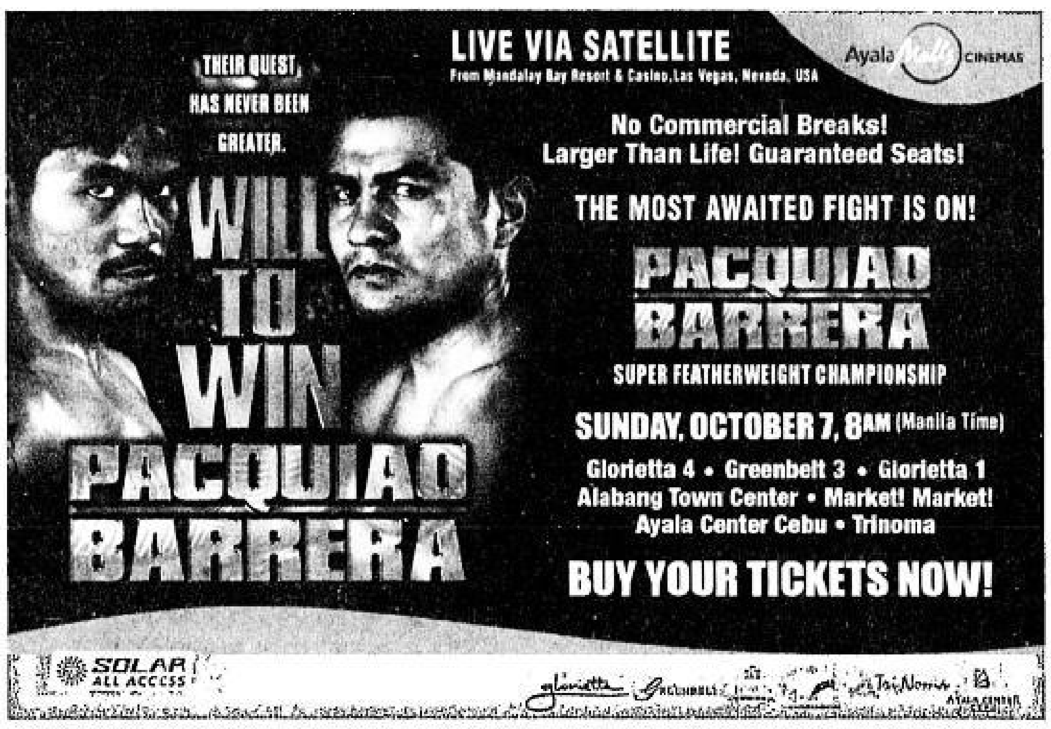
1985: "MacGyver" made its debut on ABC.

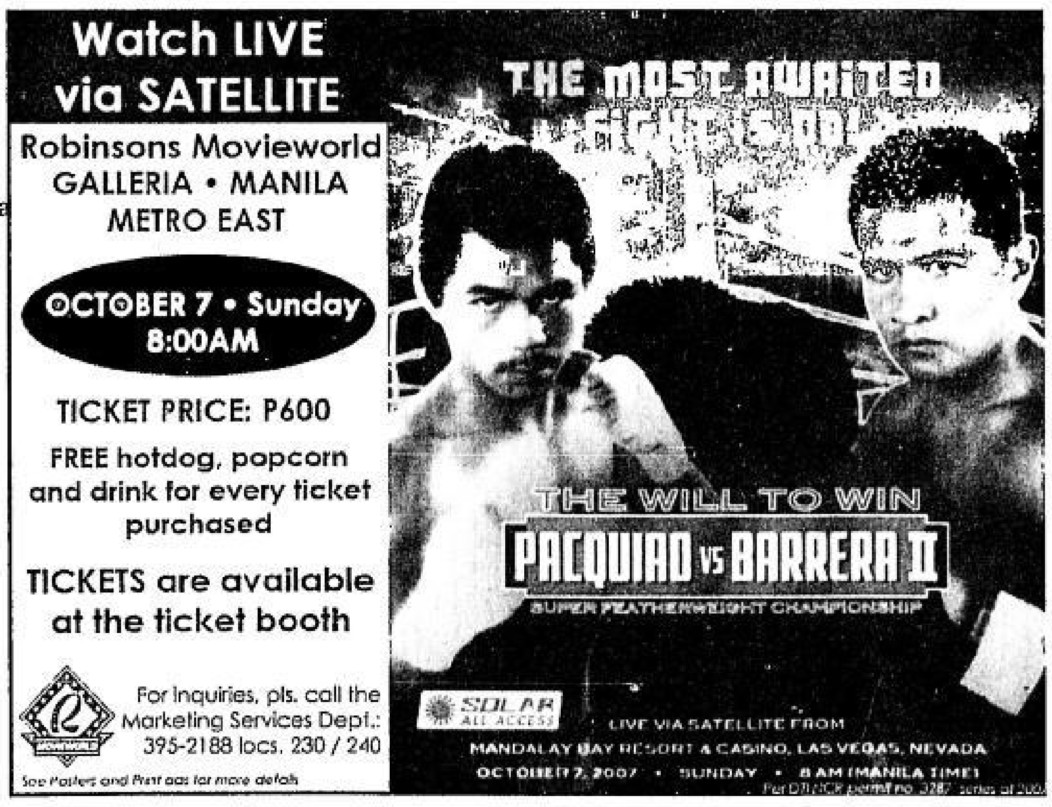
1996: Jim Carrey married Lauren Holly. She later filed for divorce.

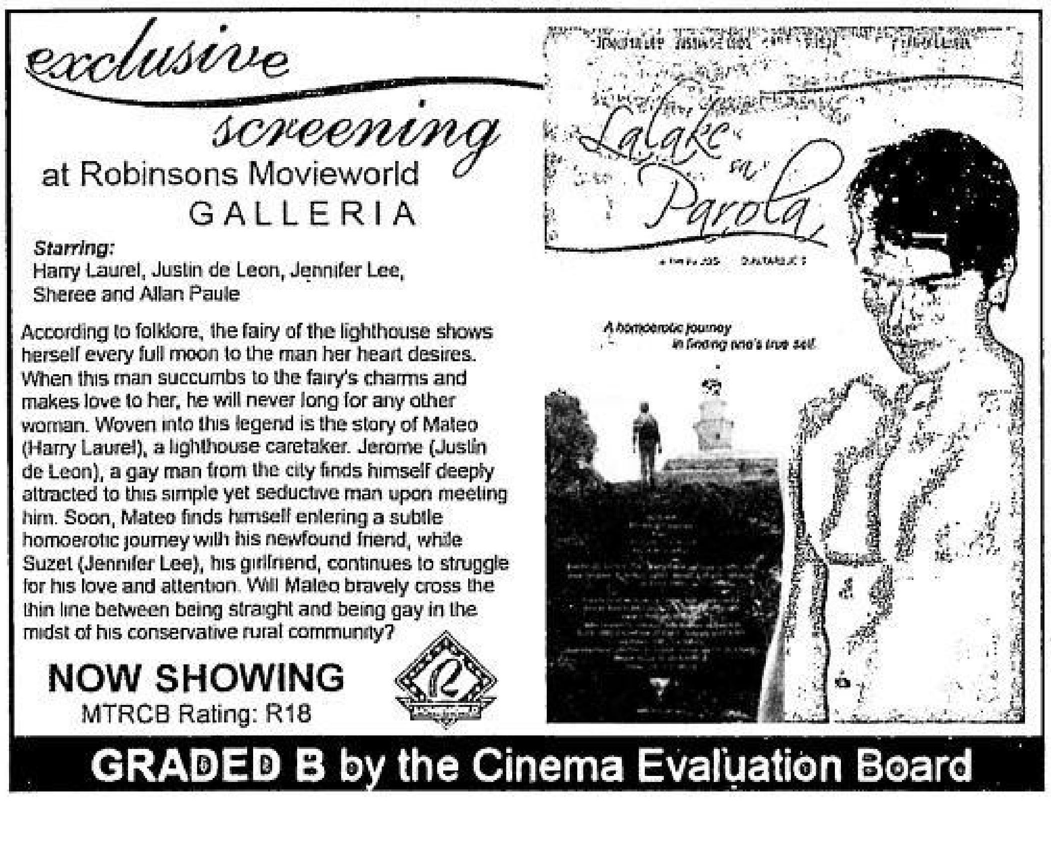
2005: Ashton Kutcher wed Demi Moore in Beverly Hills, California. *AP*

EXCLUSIVE
Ayala Malls Cinemas
Opens October 3 at Glorietta 4 and Greenbelt 3 Cinemas
From the creator of "Training Day" & "The Fast and the Furious"
CHRISTIAN BALE FREDDIE RODRIGUEZ EVA LONGORIA
"An amazing performance, one of the best of the year..." -Brian Tallerico, UGO
"A powerful film..." -Bill Zwecker, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
"Bale & Rodriguez are mesmerizing..." -Liza Schwarzbaum, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY
Harsh Times
TAKE A RIDE TO THE EDGE.
VIVA NOKIA glorietta Greenbelt

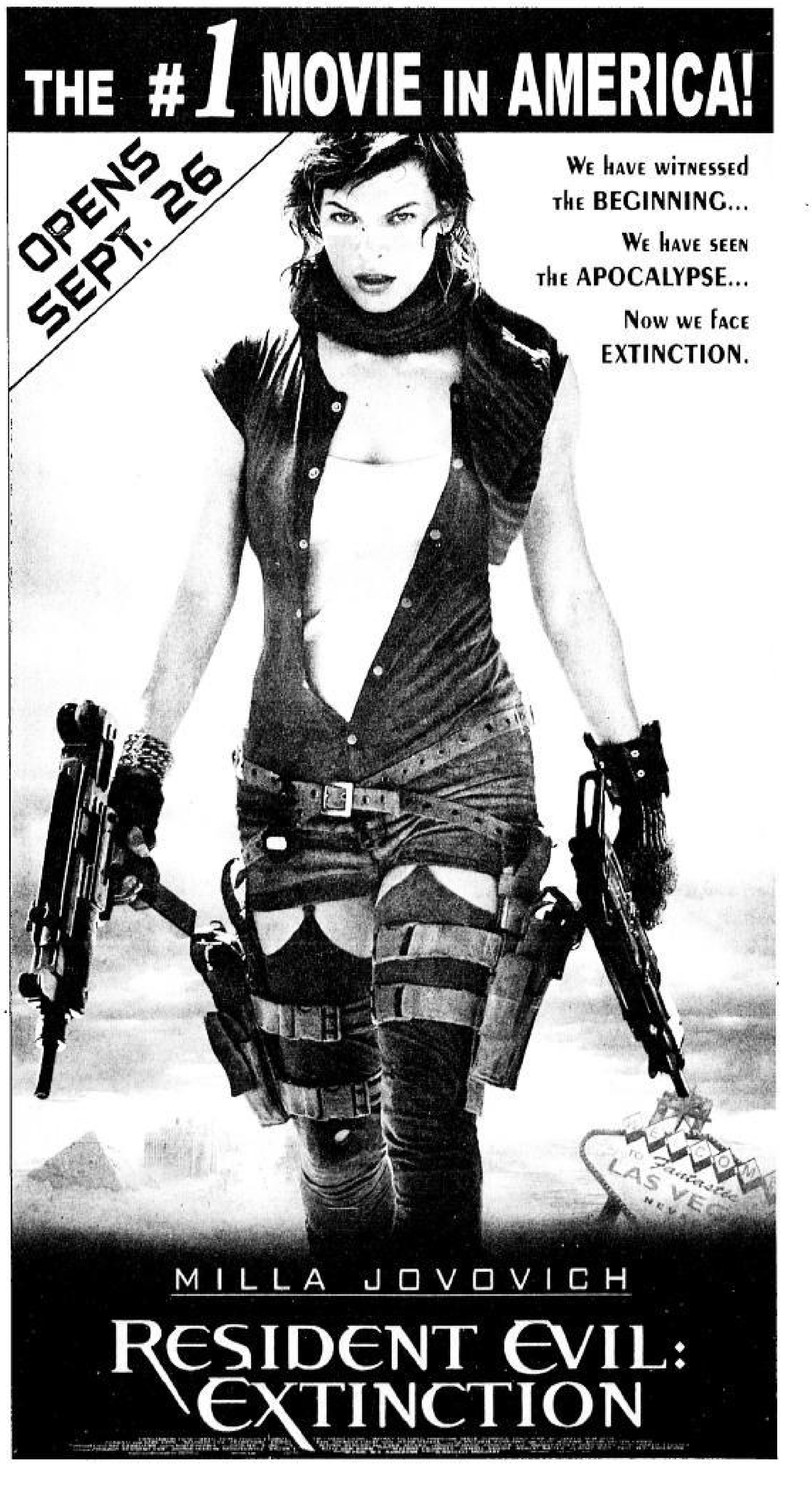

Love's Labor's Lost
ESPAÑA Morayta
REPERTORY PHILIPPINES
the City of Makati and Chicken Fun Nuggets
in cooperation with MAKE UP FOR EVER
By William Shakespeare
Directed by Bart Guingona
September 15 to October 7, 2007
Onstage, 2nd Flr., Greenbelt 1,
Paseo de Roxas cor. Legaspi St., Makati City
For details call 887-0710 or 891-9999


THEIR QUEST HAS NEVER BEEN GREATER.
WILL TO WIN
PACQUIAO BARRERA
LIVE VIA SATELLITE
From Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA
Ayala Malls Cinemas
No Commercial Breaks!
Larger Than Life! Guaranteed Seats!
THE MOST AWAITED FIGHT IS ON!
PACQUIAO BARRERA
SUPER FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 8AM (Manila Time)
Glorietta 4 • Greenbelt 3 • Glorietta 1
Alabang Town Center • Market! Market!
Ayala Center Cebu • Trinoma
BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW!
SOLAR ALL ACCESS

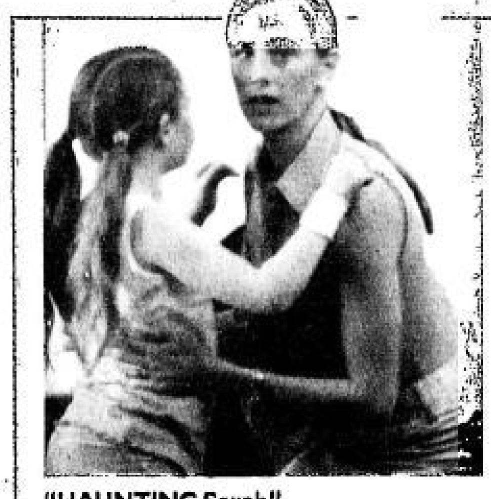

Watch LIVE via SATELLITE
Robinsons Movieworld
GALLERIA • MANILA
METRO EAST
OCTOBER 7 • Sunday 8:00AM
TICKET PRICE: P600
FREE hotdog, popcorn and drink for every ticket purchased
TICKETS are available at the ticket booth
For inquiries, pls. call the Marketing Services Dept.: 395-2188 locs. 230 / 240
See Posters and Print ads for more details
THE MOST AWAITED FIGHT IS ON!
THE WILL TO WIN
PACQUIAO vs BARRERA II
SUPER FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP
SOLAR ALL ACCESS
LIVE VIA SATELLITE FROM
MANDALAY BAY RESORT & CASINO, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
OCTOBER 7, 2007 • SUNDAY • 8 AM (MANILA TIME)


exclusive screening
at Robinsons Movieworld
GALLERIA
Starring:
Harry Laurel, Justin de Leon, Jennifer Lee, Sheree and Allan Paule
According to folklore, the fairy of the lighthouse shows herself every full moon to the man her heart desires. When this man succumbs to the fairy's charms and makes love to her, he will never long for any other woman. Woven into this legend is the story of Mateo (Harry Laurel), a lighthouse caretaker. Jerome (Justin de Leon), a gay man from the city finds himself deeply attracted to this simple yet seductive man upon meeting him. Soon, Mateo finds himself entering a subtle homoerotic journey with his newfound friend, while Suzet (Jennifer Lee), his girlfriend, continues to struggle for his love and attention. Will Mateo bravely cross the thin line between being straight and being gay in the midst of his conservative rural community?
NOW SHOWING
MTRCB Rating: R18
Lalake sa Parola
A homoerotic journey in finding one's true self
GRADED B by the Cinema Evaluation Board

KATIE AND ANDERSON ARE GETTING MARRIED...
THEY JUST MET A FEW MINUTES AGO
OPENS OCT. 3
JASON BIGGS ISLA FISHER
WEDDING DAZE


THE #1 MOVIE IN AMERICA!
OPENS SEPT. 26
We have witnessed the BEGINNING...
We have seen the APOCALYPSE...
Now we face EXTINCTION.
MILLA JOVOVICH
RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION

Thursday thriller nights



"HAUNTING Sarah"

THURSDAYS ARE THRILLER nights on the Hallmark Channel this October at 10.

In "Deadly Web" (based on a true story), Oct. 4, Teri Lawrence and her young son Spence make a new friend on the Internet following Teri's recent separation from her husband.

"CeeGee" is Spence's computer playmate but the supposedly innocent friendship takes a disturbing turn for Teri as he becomes a stalker who knows intimate details of her life.

In "Haunting Sarah," Oct. 11, Heather Lord is convinced that the spirit of her dead son is being reborn when her twin Erica discovers that she is pregnant.

Erica's young daughter Sarah, haunted by apparitions, claims to know the boy's real motives.

CLICK!

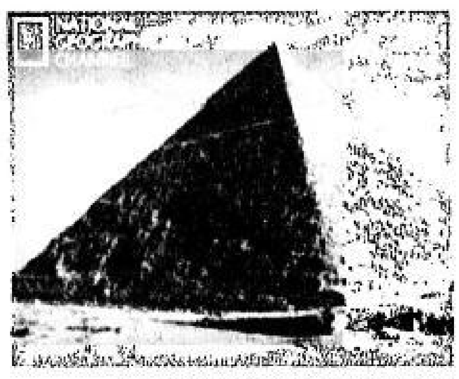
Egyptian pyramids

The Great Pyramid of Giza, four-and-half thousand years old, is the only ancient Wonder of the World still standing.

It was conceived as a resurrection machine for the enigmatic pharaoh Khufu in 2551 BC and completed over 20 years later, just before his death.

To cut and move the 2 million stones needed to build it would involve the organization of the whole Egyptian state.

"Ancient Megastructures: The Egyptian Pyramids" airs Oct. 11, 9 p.m. on the National Geographic Channel.



THE GREAT Pyramid of Giza

'Entourage' episode

In tonight's episode of HBO's "Entourage" at 11, it's Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement.

While Ari attempts to gain forgiveness for his sins, he runs into "Medellin" co-producer Nick Rubenstein at his temple.

Nick says the biopic is back in play and they'd like Vince to step in.

The only issue? The studio needs an answer from Vince before sundown—and coordinating a deal on the holy day won't be easy.

The episode, "Return of the King," guests Ed Burns and Carla Gugino.

Living legends

This October, Hallmark Channel presents living legends and their revelations in "Oprah."

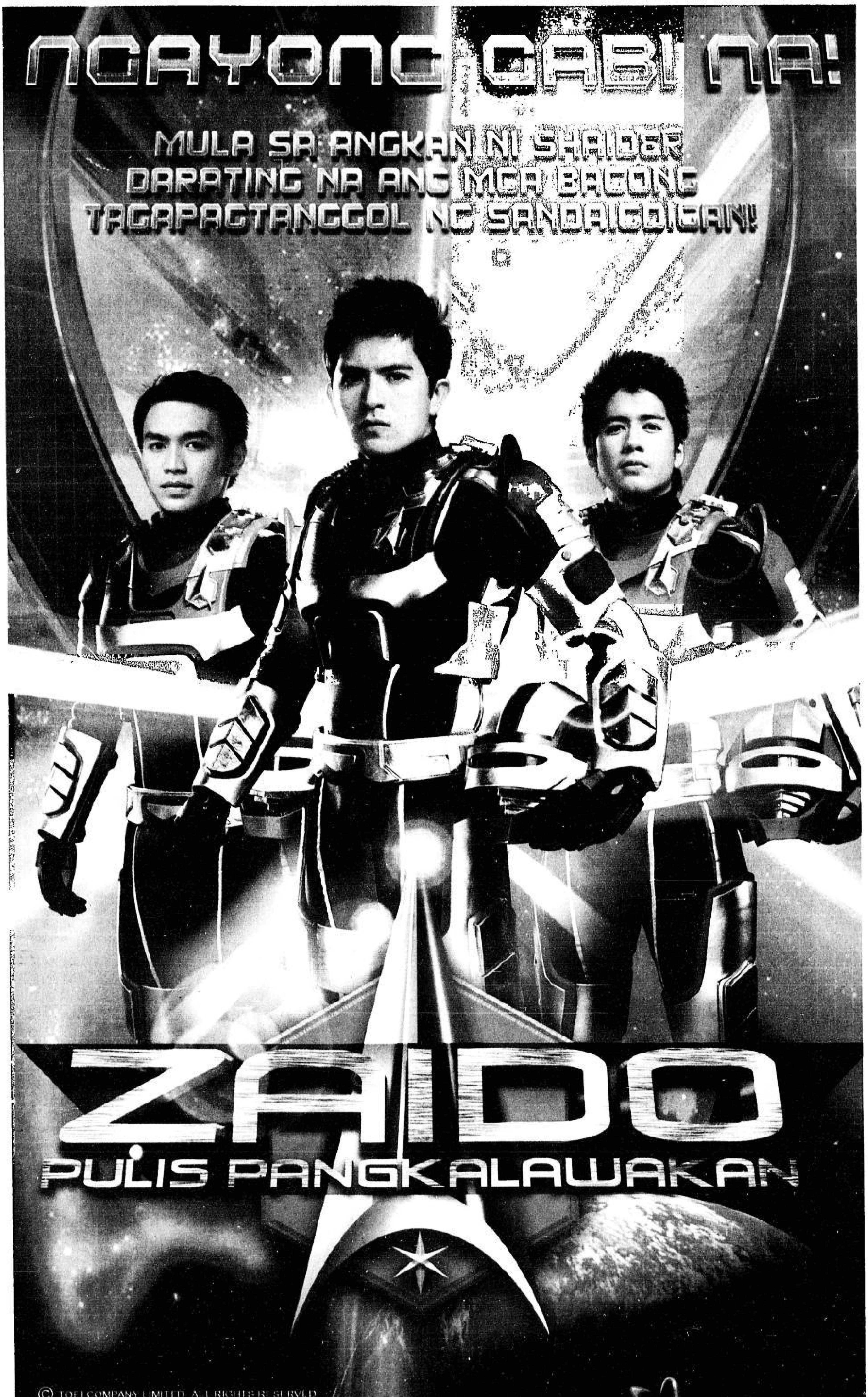
Basketball legend Magic Johnson visits the show with wife Cookie to discuss life with HIV on Oct. 7, 8 p.m.

CHRIS Rock and Oprah Winfrey

Oprah Winfrey takes a shot at round of "Deal or No Deal" as Howie Mandel brings the show all the way from Los Angeles at 8 p.m.

The popular game show's biggest winner, Michelle, also flies into share winning tips with Oprah.

Comedian-talk show host Chris Rock introduces his happy family and talks about their life-changing journey on Oct. 28, 8 p.m.


NGAYONG GABI NA!
MULA SA ANGKAN NI SHAIDER
DARATING NA ANG MGA BAGONG
TAGAPAGTANGGOL NG SANDAIGDIGAN!
ZAIDO
PULIS PANGKALAWAKAN
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TELESUCCESS PRODUCTIONS, INC.
PAGKATAPOS NG 24 ORAS SA GMA Telebabad

Reinventing music in new 'Bossafied!'

SPIN

"BOSSAFIED!" (Warner Music Philippines) is a collection of albums by major artists interpreted in the peculiar bossa nova style reflective of Brazil's laid-back beach culture.

Among these are "Bossa n' Stones" and "Bossa n' Marley," featuring the music of the Rolling Stones and Bob Marley. Buy any of the "Bossafied!" CDs from Music One Greenbelt, Glorietta and Alabang Town Center; O Rockwell; Fully Booked Greenhills and Bonifacio High Street, and get a chance to bring home a special gift from Havaianas. Promo runs from Sept. 8 to Nov. 30.

Sitti's latest

Meanwhile, Sitti's latest CD "My Bossa Nova" (Warner) has reportedly turned gold shortly after its release.

This new album has Sitti adding bossa nova flavor to U2's "With or Without You," Spice Girls' "2 Become One," Madonna's "Take a Bow," Chicago's "If You Leave Me Now," Basia's "Time & Tide," "Rivermaya's "Hinahanap-Hanap Kita" and Paul Weller's "My Ever Changing Moods," among others — plus four new originals including Sitti's self-written "A Song For Penny."

The CD will be formally launched on Sept. 28 at Fully Booked, Bonifacio High Street, The Fort.

'In Love with Manilow'

Universal Records' "In Love with Manilow" is an easy listening and bossa nova tribute which contains 18 pop classics that Barry Manilow had recorded in his career.

Album producer Ito Rapadas is featured on vocals, including other Filipino artists (Gail Blanco, Arthur Manuntag and Judith Alegarbes) who deliver their own interpretations of Manilow's hits.

Kim Chiu's album

Seventeen-year-old Chinese-Cebuana Kim Chiu, winner of ABS-CBN's reality TV show Pinoy Big Brother (PBB) Teen Edition, has recorded her own debut album.

The CD, "Gwa Ai Di" (Star Records), contains romantic tunes for the teenage set, led by the carrier single "Crazy Love." It also has three Chinese tracks: "Peng Yeo," a song that Kim first sang in PBB and which means "friend"; "The Moon Represents My Heart" which is traditionally sang at weddings; and the album's title cut whose English translation is "I love you."

Kim is currently touring the malls to promote "Gwa Ai Di."

Prince returns

Prince is back with "Planet Earth" (Sony BMG), a new album that is said to have revisited some of his classic signature sound.

The songs have hard-rock grooves, as well as smooth R&B sides. Rob Sheffield of Rolling Stone says: "Planet Earth" is one of those albums he makes when he's trying a little harder than usual, if not hard enough to alienate his core audience, which loves him for indulging himself."

The "Planet Earth" CD comes with a special packaging cover that includes 3-D effects. For more details, log on to www.sonybmg.com.ph.

PRINCE

EXCLUSIVE THIS WEEK!

Coke Yes! Linggo-Linggo
Coca-Cola

YES! GANG'S HOTTEST TARGET SPURS CRAZE!

Seven Honda Jazz cars on the loose!

Yes! Yes! Yes! You win a HONDA JAZZ if the message under your crown is:** YES, DON'T LOSE YOUR DRIVE!

People queuing 48 hours prior to the launch date. Lines extending for miles. Traffic at a standstill for hours. Pandemonium at *sari-sari* stores. All because the whole nation is now after the winning Coke Yes! crowns and a chance to say Yes! to a red-hot HONDA JAZZ. Yes! The hunt, now on its last week, has officially become a craze.

As soon as word leaked out about this week's oh-so-desirable "Yes!" thing (not one, not two, not three, not even six, but seven Honda Jazz cars will be given away!), each and every member of the "Yes-Yes-Yo!" Gang came out full-force to secure cases and cases of Coke, Royal and Sprite 8oz. and 12oz. Some even tried calling their ever-reliable *sari-sari* stores to reserve as much Coca-Cola products as they can.

Pretty crazy, huh? But, then again, it's hard to stay sane when you know one of the seven Honda Jazz cars (plus the previous targets – cellphones, iPod Nanos, PSPs, MacBooks and SK-125 Scooters) could be waiting with every ice-cold Coke that you can get your hands on. And who wouldn't line up for that?

"At 5am, I was already outside the *sari-sari* store. And no, I wasn't even first in line. But it was all worth it. I now have ten cases of Coke. Quite an experience. To think that I had never lined up for anything in my life before," says one of the Yes! members.

The target this week must really be sizzling hot, that even with Coke vendors in virtually all corners of this country ready to give you as much as Coke as you wish, such a fanatical scenario cannot be helped from sweeping across the nation, affecting everyone in its path.

"I have, like, a room-full of shoes, bags, clothes and Coke at home. I bought, like, so much, like, this morning. I stayed under the sun *pa ah kasi ang tagal bumili ng* girl before me. Gosh, *buti nalang* I wore sunblock. I made *kulit* the *sari-sari* store owner to like, give me all her cases of Coke. As in all. Now *na*. *Kasi* the Honda Jazz and I, we're like, really *bagay* eh. It's cute, I'm cute. Like made for each other *kami*," a *kikay* Yes! member shares.

"They don't have this kind of Yes! hunt back in the States and it's just too exciting to pass up on. And a Honda Jazz in exchange for that winning Yes! crown? C'mon, give me all the Coke in this country! I've been wanting a Honda Jazz for so long. It's a compact car that loves fun. Loves space. But doesn't love gas that much. Very fuel-efficient. Yes! I so feel it. It's red-hot and ready to be mine. I know that winning Yes! crown is in one of these cases I just bought," a wide-eyed *balikbayan* continues with so much enthusiasm.

And you? What are you waiting for? Join the craze now. Go run after all the Coke, Royal and Sprite you can find before everyone else bags them! Because really, after five weeks of running around for targets, wouldn't it be nice to finally rest your poor feet and drive home in a spankin' new Honda Jazz? •

BUY more Coke 8oz. or 12oz. now!

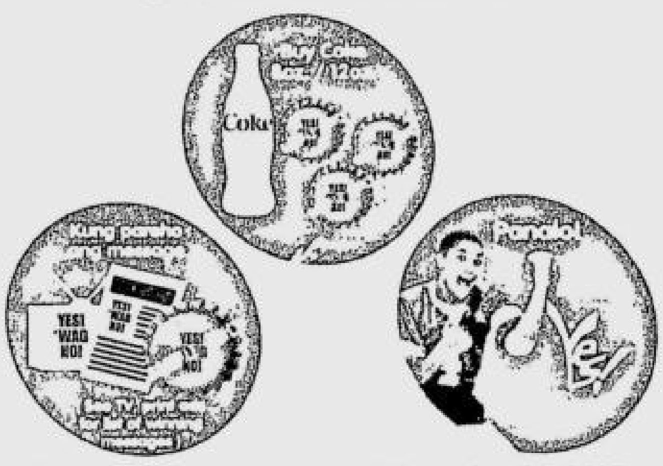
240,000 have already won. Yes! You might be next!

Is it your chance to say Yes! to a HONDA JAZZ this week? With "Buhay Coke, Yes, Linggo-Linggo," if the message under your Coke crown is **"YES, DON'T LOSE YOUR DRIVE!"** then go ahead, grab your chance to say Yes! to a HONDA JAZZ right now!

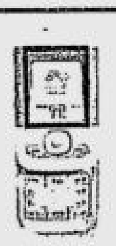
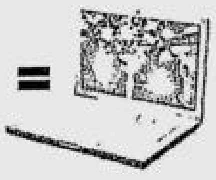
But if non-winning crowns are all you've got at the moment, what's stopping you? Just buy more **Coke, Sprite, Royal 8oz. and 12oz.** and look under the crown for the Yes! message. If it matches the winning message on this page and on the recap announcements on GMA and ABS-CBN, then Yes! you're a winner!

And Yes! You can also win instantly! Millions of Jollibee Meals (1-pc. Chickenjoy Meal, Jollibee Spaghetti Meal or Regular Meal) to be given away under the crown.•

YES! YOU CAN STILL WIN!



All prizes can be claimed until November 29, 2007

100 Nokia 5300 XpressMusic Phones	50 iPod Nano 2GB	50 Sony Portable PlayStations	35 MacBooks	35 SK-125 Scooters
YES, MAY SASAGOT SA 'YO!* = 	YES, PAKINGGAN MO NA 'NO!* =	YES, KAHIT SAAN DAPAT GAME!* =	YES, POWER ON!* = 	YES, MARARATING MO 'YUN!* =

All winning crowns have security markings and are subject to verification and authentication by Coca-Cola representatives.

For major prize redemption, please call the Coca-Cola hotlines: 813-2653 / 813-COKE (GMA)
or 1-800-1-888 2653 /1-800-1-888 COKE (Provincial areas) Jollibee meals can be claimed at any Jollibee outlet nationwide.

*Crown look may vary.
**Photo may vary from actual unit.

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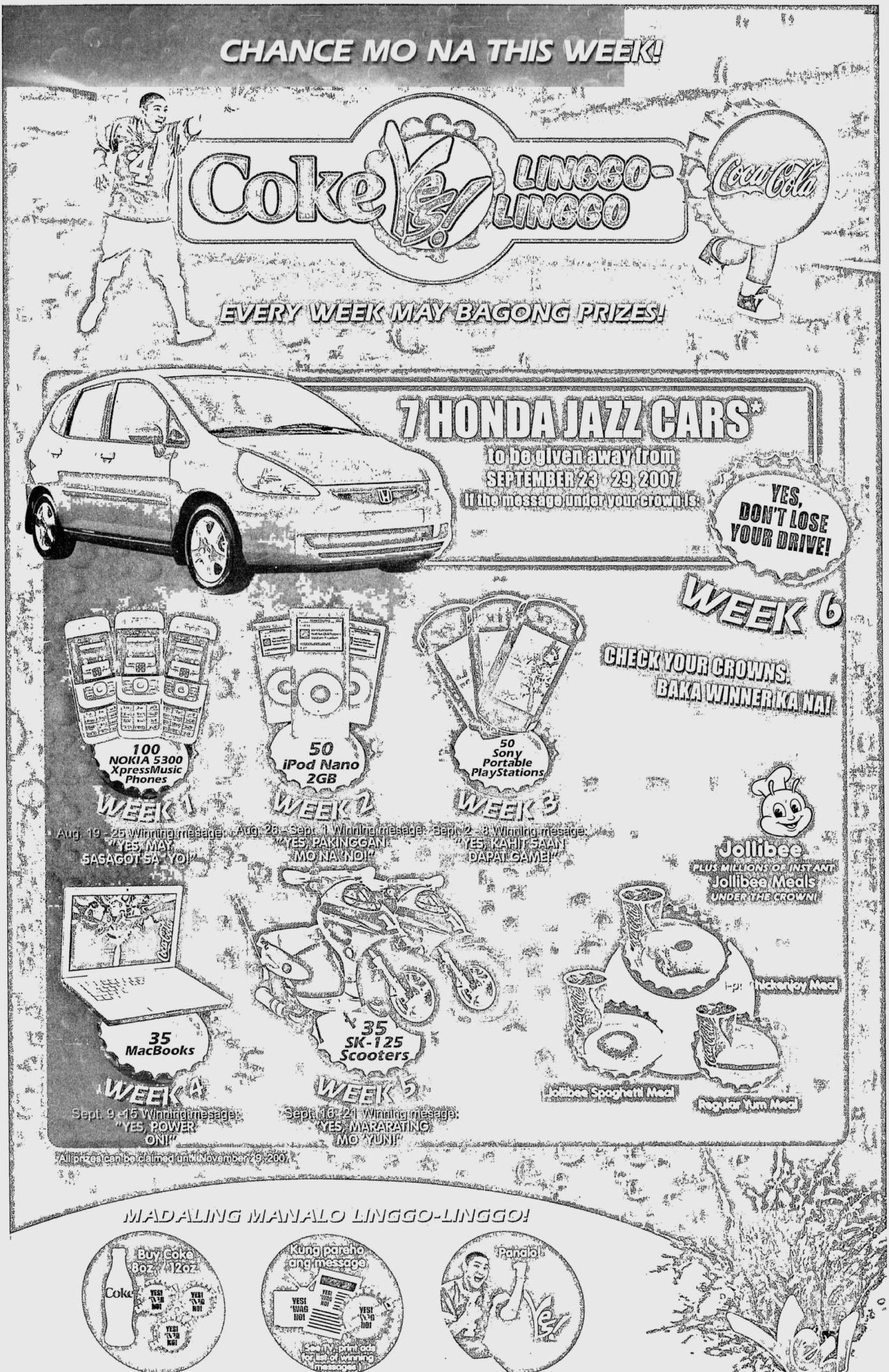
Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 0578 series of 2007.



CHANCE MO NA THIS WEEK!

Coke Yes! LINGGO-LINGGO

EVERY WEEK MAY BAGONG PRIZES!

7 HONDA JAZZ CARS*

to be given away from
SEPTEMBER 23 - 29, 2007
if the message under your crown is:

YES, DON'T LOSE YOUR DRIVE!

WEEK 6

CHECK YOUR CROWNS.
BAKA WINNER KA NA!

100 NOKIA 5300 XpressMusic Phones

WEEK 1

Aug. 19 - 25 Winning mesage:
"YES, MAY SASAGOT SA 'YO!"

50 iPod Nano 2GB

WEEK 2

Aug. 26 - Sept. 1 Winning mesage:
"YES, PAKINGGAN MO NA 'NO!"

50 Sony Portable PlayStations

WEEK 3

Sept. 2 - 8 Winning mesage:
"YES, KAHIT SAAN DAPAT GAME!"

Jollibee
PLUS MILLIONS OF INSTANT
Jollibee Meals
UNDER THE CROWN!

1-pc Chickenjoy Meal

Jollibee Spaghetti Meal

Regular Yum Meal

35 MacBooks

WEEK 4

Sept. 9 - 15 Winning mesage:
"YES, POWER ON!"

35 SK-125 Scooters

WEEK 5

Sept. 16 - 21 Winning mesage:
"YES, MARARATING MO 'YUN!"

*All prizes can be claimed until November 29, 2007.

MADALING MANALO LINGGO-LINGGO!

Buy Coke 8oz. / 12oz.

Kung pareho ang message

See TV-print ads for list of winning messages

Panalo!

MAY 2 WAYS TO WIN. NAPAKADALING MANALO'T SUMALI!

A. WEEKLY MAJOR PRIZES

1. Buy any participating Coke products (Coke, Sprite or Royal 8oz. or 12oz.) with specially-marked 'Yes!' Crowns.
2. Look under the crown to see the 'Yes!' Message.
3. Watch for the announcements of the winning 'Yes!' Message of the week on GMA and ABS-CBN at 5:30pm daily, and on the Philippine Daily Inquirer & Inquirer Libre every Monday.
4. If the winning 'Yes!' Message of the week matches the message under the crown, consumer wins the corresponding weekly prize.
5. For instructions on how to claim the major weekly prizes, call the Coca-Cola Hotlines:

GMA	813-2653 / (813- COKE)
Provincial Areas	1-800-1-888 2653 / (1-800-1-888-COKE)

B. INSTANT JOLLIBEE FOOD PRIZES

1. Buy any participating Coke products (Coke, Sprite or Royal 8oz. or 12oz.) with specially-marked 'Yes!' Crowns, for a chance to win Jollibee food items instantly.
2. Look for the 'Yes!' Message under the crown.
3. If the Jollibee instant win message is under the crown, consumer wins the corresponding prize.
4. Winning crowns may be presented for verification and prizes may be claimed at any Jollibee outlet nationwide.

This is a nationwide promotion.
All prizes over P10,000 are tax free.
All winning crowns have security markings and are subject to verification and authentication by Coca-Cola representatives.
Employees of TCCEC, CCBP, Jollibee Foods Corporation, their advertising agencies, BFAD and their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity and affinity as well as employees of TCCEC's and CCBP's subsidiaries, affiliates and service providers are disqualified from joining this promotion. Third party suppliers and their employees are also disqualified.
Decisions made by Coca-Cola are final.

Promo period is from August 19 to September 29, 2007.
Deadline of claiming prizes is on November 29, 2007.
*Photo may vary from actual unit.

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Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 0578 series of 2007

Coca-Cola RIDE TO FAME

to your dreams!

THE BIG SIX

Six weeks ago, twelve bright and dandy, wide-eyed faces got on a bus and said Yes! to an exhilarating and starry, starry ride. Several bumps, stopovers and valid stamps on their passports later, six of these faces have now emerged as certified personalities to watch for. Here they are, enjoying their upgraded, spotlight-worthy seats on this bus that's on the road to an exclusive destination: FAME.

OWYNG

[illegible]

The thing about fame is..."You can meet a lot of big celebrities and you get to go to different places."

I said Yes! to this ride because... "This is no ordinary ride. Here, one will meet friends who are extremely talented."

The Ride has been... "Great! I've learned a lot. I'm a better performer now."

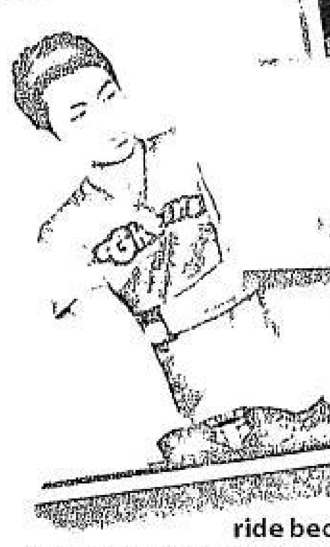
The most difficult bump was when... "We were tasked to write our own song. It was my first time to write and I got worried *na baka 'di magustuhan*. But I'm glad the judges liked it."

I think I am a total performer because... "I can sing well, dance gracefully and can write songs even if I've had little experience."

Other than performing, I plan to say Yes! to... "Cooking! I love cooking dishes for my friends!"

Once I arrive at the destination, the first thing I will do is... "Pray! I'll pray for more guidance from the Lord."

If I leave before then, I will..."Continue my studies again and of course, still pursue my bigger dream of becoming a star."



DARYL

The thing about fame is.. "It gives you the power to influence other people."

I said Yes! to this ride because..."I want to make the people close to me proud. And also to inspire others to say YES! *'WAG* NO!"

The Ride has been..."Exciting, full of twists and turns. Good learning experience."

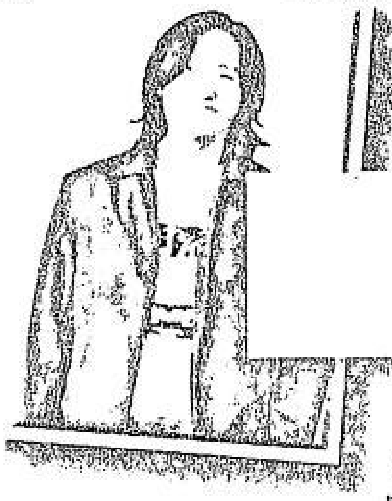
The most difficult bump was when..."Giu and Carl, two of my closest friends, were eliminated."

I think I am a total performer because..."I have a teachable heart. I am also persevering and hardworking."

Other than performing, I plan to say Yes! to.. "Commercials, modeling and studying!"

Once I arrive at the destination, the first thing I will do is..."Share with everyone what I've learned and give glory to God for the things He has given me."

If I leave the bus before then, I will... "Continue my dream of performing while studying."



LEX

The thing about fame is.. "The opportunity to know many friends and the chance to get the best privileges."

I said Yes! to this ride because..."I deserve it."

The Ride has been..."So fun and great! I can feel the ride is getting faster and rougher as we head towards our dreams. Quit? No way!"

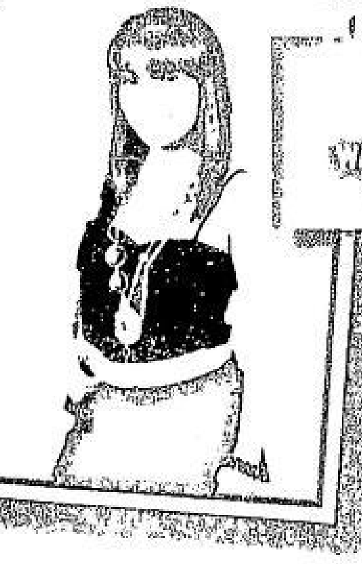
The most difficult bump was when... "Actually, no challenge has ever been that difficult yet for me since I've conquered most of them."

I think I am a total performer because... "I actually believe that I am the one. I have the whole package!"

Other than performing, I plan to say Yes! to... "School and business"

Once I arrive at the destination, the first thing I will do is..."Get as much projects as possible."

If I leave before then, I will..."Continue to follow my dreams and also study."



CHESKA

[illegible]

The thing about fame is..."You're able to inspire people and make them want to copy the good traits that you have."

I said Yes! to this ride because... "I want to follow my dreams, help my family and my band. And through this ride, I will show everyone that I can do it."

The Ride has been..."Fun! I will never forget it! Though all the challenges have been difficult, we were still able to develop beautiful friendships out of it."

The most difficult bump was when..."My piece was suddenly changed a few minutes before I performed. *Ang chaka, pero* go, go, go *pa rin.*"

I think I am a total performer because..."I have the determination to face challenges and that desire to share with everyone what God has given me. I think I have a good character and that's what's important in this business."

Other than performing, I plan to say Yes! to... "EDUCATION! This is the best I can give my parents!"

Once I arrive at the destination, the first thing I will do is..."I will have several rooms built! Hahaha! I plan to buy our own house and start a business. The rest I will donate to the church or orphanage."

If I leave before then, I will..."Take it as a challenge. If that's what people want, I respect that. I have to face a bigger challenge ahead."

AVA

The thing about fame is... "What's that? I don't know that!"

I said Yes! to this ride because.. "I have a dream *na gusto ko marating... kasama ang family ko sa pagbiyahe hanggang sa huli.*"

The Ride has been..."So cool and *astig* for me. *Sobrang saya!*"

The most difficult bump was when...

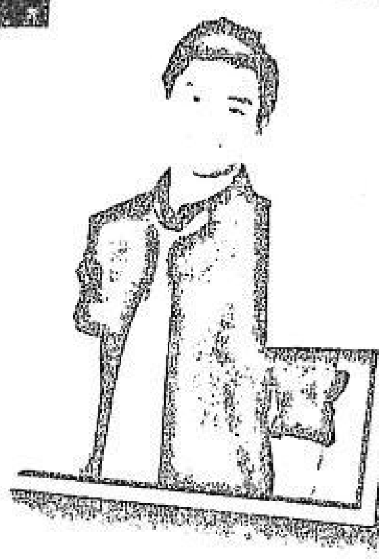
"I can't think of any particular one. All have been challenging, but also rewarding!"

I think I am a total performer because..."I'm a big woman! Haha! *Dahil seryoso ako sa lahat ng ginagawa ko.*"

Other than performing, I plan to say Yes! to... "*Sa pag-aaral. 'Di lang talent ang dapat matututunan, dapat pati ang diskarte sa buhay. Gusto ko pa matuto.*"

Once I arrive at the destination, the first thing I will do is... "Pray. And pray hard."

If I leave before then, I will..."*Bubutasin ko ang gulong ng* bus *na 'to! Para hindi na sila maka-*ride *sa* next destination *nila!!!*"



AL

The thing about fame is.. "*Di ko alam eh..* never been there."

I said Yes! to this ride because..."I want to help my family."

The Ride has been..."Fun. *Kakatakot. Kakakaba. Kaka-*pressure. *Pero masaya!*"

The most difficult bump was when..."*Lahat,* so far. It's only now that I'm learning to sing and dance. That's why I struggle in every performance but of course, I still give my best."

I think I am a total performer because... "Hmmm, maybe not yet. But I'm going to give my best to become one."

Other than performing, I plan to say Yes! to... "Acting and Muai Thai."

Once I arrive at the destination, the first thing I will do is..."Thank God and start a business, maybe an internet shop or something."

If I leave before then, I will..."Continue my dream. *Hindi ako titigil sa pagkanta.* I will still give my best. *Para makatulong sa pamilya.*"

Styling by: human

Saya ng family bonding
₱22 Coke Litro
Bonding sa Buhay Coke Buksan Mo
Coca-Cola